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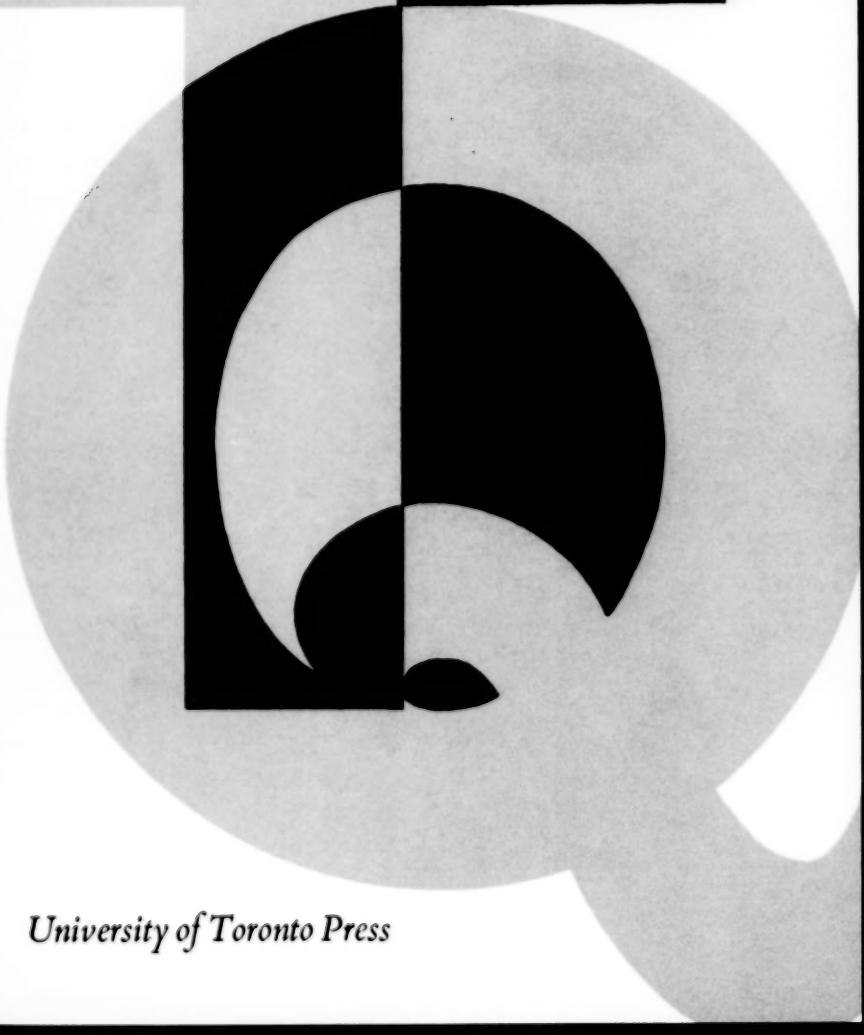

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JOHN R. SEELEY

*The Future of Psychiatry**

My main function . . . must be to initiate a conversation among us.

ROBERT J. OPPENHEIMER

I do not seek, in this paper, to present a finished, fully articulated argument, girded about with even momentary moral certainty. I merely suggest some openings towards views, some first tentative gropings and movements of thought and feeling. I cannot even guarantee that any part of what I say is news.

For reasons which may be evident later, I should like to take pains to clarify my role and the status of my statement. I come among psychiatrists as a "friendly stranger"—which is also, I take it, the position from which they speak to their patients. The role of the stranger, as Georg Simmel has so well described it, is that of the person who is simultaneously near and far, who accordingly sees some things and misses some, and sees yet others in a perspective different from our own. I need hardly press my claim to the title: I am no biologist, no physician, and my concerns are chiefly with society and social theory rather than with men in their severalty and practice with its problems. Nor must I press my claim too far: not to the point of utter strangeness. I have lived among psychiatrists for twenty years now, either as a guest in their scientific house or as host to them in mine.

I have qualified the word "stranger" by the word "friendly" for good reason. By the use of that word I imply the existence between us of a disinterested love—a congeniality, tempered and enlivened, fed and restrained, by what I believe to be our dedication to a common obligation. If I urge anything upon you, it is only in virtue, as Polyani would say, of a commitment to ends which are sufficiently universal to command and unite us both. Is this not also the relation within which and the ethic under which your practice is conducted? Is it not true, as I heard someone

*A lecture given on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Psychiatry Service at Massachusetts General Hospital.

say recently, that we have the right to seek to change only what we love? Is it not also true that we may say we love only what we are willing to take responsibility for changing?

Last, let me warn in preface, that what is in form a prediction is in fact a plea. In stating a belief as to the future of psychiatry, I am in fact seeking to give effect to a hope. I am making an assertion which tends to tip the balance of action in favour of its own confirmation. A psychiatrist who tells his patient, explicitly or implicitly, that he expects him to recover, is counting upon what appears as a statement of fact to have a consequence in what it purports to predict. So am I. We hold up mirrors, but the reflections from them inescapably and sometimes profoundly alter the objects reflected. Therapy counts upon the fact and social science must come to terms with it.

The practice of psychiatry is, I am sure, full of satisfaction—win, lose, or draw with the patient. There is joy in success; heightened interest and determination in the face of failure. It is only when we try to make what we do intelligible that the difficulties multiply and, for good reason, the anxiety mounts. This difficulty is common to all professions. All have secrets: some to be concealed from the public, some from colleagues, some even from oneself, the *ultra-privatissima*. But psychiatrists who believe in uncovering when covering hampers performance may be under special mandate to steel themselves to its pains. In any case, since I also believe that the future of psychiatry is bound up so much more with clarification of theory than inventions of practice, I shall assume that the pressures of necessity are added to the fortitude and patience for which I ask.

Foremost among the insufficiently aired or examined questions in psychiatry is the one concerning its relation to other medical specialties. It has fought so long and hard for a place in the medical sun, for recognition as a respectable specialty, that it has emphasized its similarities almost to the point of denying difference. Yet it differs from the others more deeply than they differ from each other, and that distinction is of the essence, not the accidents, of psychiatry. Other specialties differ from each other by distinctions in space—the human geography seized upon, GU, GI, ENT, and so on—or distinctions in time such as paediatrics or gerontology. What psychiatry deals with essentially has no locus in space and no focus in time. It differs in the most radical of all possible ways, since it treats of and with man as human, a being in a moral order, as over against the natural order, biological or physical.

Psychiatrists in their role as general physicians may *in that role* deal with their patients as machines or organisms, that is, as objects. But to the degree that they do so, they are either merely (as general physicians) creating suitable conditions for their true work as psychiatrists, or using mechanical or biological means to communicate a human message. Such a conjuncture of roles or mixture of means may be practically inescapable, but practical convenience should not be allowed to obscure theoretical clarity. That which is essentially psychiatric in the compound act is that in which a person is dealt with as a person by a person, that which lies wholly in the dimension of the distinctively human, that which is altogether in the order of choice and value.

For this reason, because of the order of reality addressed, psychiatrists are inevitably allied with and fraternal to all others who deal with man as man: priest, king, philosopher, teacher, preacher, pundit, and propagandist. The psychiatrist alone, in this sense, represents humanity in the court of medicine; and only in the sense in which medicine, in general and regardless of means, is itself an organization of tender, loving care does he represent medicine in the court of humanity. The psychiatrist is thus cast in the role of ambassador in two countries of a third country yet to be defined. He may expect the privileges of embassy—some diplomatic immunity, a chance to be heard on occasion—but he must not be surprised to be regarded as "strange," to be only partly understood, to have such views as are understood taken account of rather than adopted. Even these privileges may only accrue when the identification is clear; an undeclared ambassador may seem something less to others as well as to himself.

Once the distinction is clear, the chances of peace, order, and good government in medicine are vastly increased. We might, moreover, have a less divided performance, a more vivid self-image for ourselves, psychiatrists, and social scientists alike. There might even ensue a cessation of attempts to state perfectly valid human insights in pseudo-physical, pseudo-biological terms—a procedure that robs them of their immediate power of conviction without establishing them securely in the forum of science.

It follows, I think, that theory *in* psychiatry is social theory, and theory *about* psychiatry is philosophy. Physics and biology bear on another and circumambient realm. The practice of psychiatry is hence social practice, and physical and biological practice come in as mere *mise-en-scène*, mere condition-creation for psychiatry itself.

It is difficult to overstress the point. Might I be permitted an analogy from education, which also has the perennial difficulty of disentangling from the myriad things that educators do those acts or aspects of acts that can rightly be called "education." One condition for effective teaching usually is that the child can see a classroom's length to the blackboard. If he is unable to see so that the teacher can teach, the eye problem may be mechanical and amenable to surgery or correction by spectacles; or it may be physiological and tractable by vitamins or other ingestanda. But surgery-doing and pill-giving are not education, even if (which God forbid) the teacher does them; they merely establish conditions favourable to the pursuit of it. Even should the teacher argue (as all might and some do) that first-aid given by him shows love and hence establishes a relation inside which education can proceed better or deeper, surely this does not mean that the administration of first-aid *is* education. It means, at most, that a teacher should or must sometimes perform *other* roles for the sake of his distinctive and unique one. Whether he separates or mixes roles in practice is a matter of practical convenience and must be judged by practical tests; whether he distinguishes his roles theoretically is a matter of vital moment. If he isn't clear, at least in his thinking, he confuses himself and others. And confusion is precisely that which an educator—like a psychiatrist—is mandated to dispel.

You may wish to maintain that physical, biological, and social interventions are so closely linked in the equivalence of their effects that I have overdrawn a distinction to make a point. A little improvement in surgery or pharmacology might soon make it possible by a surgical nick here or there, a tablet or capsule now and then, to banish anxiety, allay the consciousness of guilt, evoke euphoria, release energy, engineer mood, and so on. (I am told that a little alcohol will, even now, do these things for some.) What then becomes of a distinct moral order? Is psychology not reducible to physics and chemistry?

I think not. I agree that we could remove from the universe all generically psychiatric problems. One way would be to exterminate all people. If that seems a trifle radical, a competent corps of anaesthesiologists together with a team of specialists in intravenous feeding could, no doubt, remove from the world all psychiatric problems—except their own. But, obviously, such interventions remove psychiatric problems in precise proportion as they destroy human nature. Less radical interventions simply alter the base from which psychiatry has to operate. Like other forms of increase in affluence, or available possibilities, such means

augment rather than diminish the problems with which psychiatry has to deal. As long as humanity remains, irreducibly psychiatric problems remain: they have to do with what man can do with himself as a human being, not as a machine or an animal. The better he is cared for as machine and animal, the more open his human potentialities, the greater his psychological vulnerability, probably the more numerous and the greater his psychiatric problems.

So much for the relation to medicine.

The distinction drawn does something more, however, than redefine the relation of psychiatry to medicine. The fact that psychiatry deals with men as members of a moral order alters every important perspective we have upon it. It raises new epistemological problems: problems of the kind of knowledge we can have of such a being in that capacity. It raises new conceptual problems: questions about the meanings to be attributed to key terms such as "health" and "disease." It raises ethical questions, having to do with the criteria for success, the warrant for interventions of various extents, and so on. It raises linguistic questions: What is a vocabulary appropriate to catch what we want to talk about?

Let me begin with some assertions in a philosophy of knowledge—not, be it noted, a psychology of knowledge. There is a difference between the consequences of a mistaken conception of its "object" in physics and a mistaken conception in psychology or social science. A mistaken idea in physics leads to inconvenience for the scientist, but does not affect the behaviour of physical objects. A mistaken idea in psychology, *per contra*, is not only inconvenient to the knower; it limits or traumatizes both the knower and the known, and is thus not only scientifically but morally a wrong. In "taking a view" of man, and of the relation of human science to man, we have to confront simultaneously scientific and moral criteria of rightness: a right view is a good view, and a wrong view is not simply erroneous but bad.

I shall maintain that the right view—the view justified by the facts—and the good view as to the object of a science of man are one and the same. I shall also maintain that the sciences of man share one object or purpose, equally centrally, with the practice of psychiatry. The object is nothing more nor less than to liberate or free man, to increase the range, significance, and importance of his choice.

How is such a view to be reconciled with the prevailing view that the object of any science is the discovery of determinate connections? Obviously, if this definition of science is insisted upon, it would be better

to renounce the use of the word "science" than to twist our perception of what is the meaning of "human" and "social." The difference may cut deep enough to call for another term, and some of the reasons are obvious.

In physics, the statement of law that relates volume, temperature, and pressure neither frees nor binds the action of molecules. But, of course, the molecules do not hear us, and we, the speakers, are not molecules. When we state "a law of human nature," even if correctly, human beings do hear us, and we are human beings. The very statement of the law alters the nature of what we are speaking about, and virtually invites, or sometimes directly effects, an escape from the determinacy that it is supposed to establish or describe. Let me illustrate. A really naïve and tradition-bound culture has as its culture-bearers persons whose lives are indeed to a sensible degree "determined by their culture." If prediction is the aim of science, we can probably very well predict about them. If determinacy is the test, we have determinacy. But along comes an anthropologist and states as a law that human beings are tradition and culture bound. Eventually his "subjects" hear him or read him. Knowledge of what he has said is now "in the culture" so that if his people are "culture bound," they are now bound by a radically different culture. Moreover, they, having this knowledge, are by that much radically different. So that what is bound as well as what binds is changed. Once a "tradition-bound" culture has, as an element in it, the knowledge that it is tradition-bound, the society concerned is well on the way to the probability or necessity of self-regulation by some other mechanism. Tradition, in virtue of knowledge as to its effective control, is in movement toward the loss of effective control.

The social scientist has thus a most peculiar role. When he speaks, as a human or social scientist, he is standing in one sense outside and above the system he is talking about. But if he credits his own performance, he must, as Polyani also maintains, credit the capacity of others to do the same. We must therefore accredit also the capacity of others to alter or negate the very regularity that we reported upon. What we do then, in making our assertions about human behaviour, is to shape steps upon which men may eternally climb out of the very pits in which we observe them.

I am thus asserting what I believe to be a fundamental metaphysical statement: that when we talk of man or men we are speaking of utterly indeterminate, absolutely infinite systems—at least as far as the long-run future is concerned. When we talk of atoms, we may with reasonable

confidence hold that the laws of gravitation will be the same in a million years as now. When we talk of man, we cannot even predict to 1984; or, if we do, we may ensure by so doing either that it turns out as Orwell sketched it, or that precisely that fate is avoided.

A human system is thus one in which any statement about the system is vitally *in* the system, immediately or in the next virtual instant. Such a system has indeed a history, but cannot have scientific laws analogical to those of chemistry and physics. It is not merely that the system is open or has feedback. The very statement of a determinacy or determinate relation feeds back not into a mechanical and deterministic process, but into a creative, building-up act, the living of a life, which the asserted determinacy really must deny as its premise. You cannot say to a child something as simple even as "If you hit your little brother you'll feel ashamed" without *in the statement* altering him, you, and the probability of the stated association of events.

This view implies another (a statement about human nature thus implying another about the nature of human knowledge of matters human). Clearly, the human knower stands outside the human known, whether the known is another or himself. Even if, in the same instant or the next, he takes cognizance of himself as knower and himself as known, it is now a new knower, now outside the first knower and the first known. And so infinitely. Human knowledge thus appears as a flickering snapshot of a movement that in the next instant falsifies its own picture. Knowledge of things human is thus journalistic, that is, more or less true but only for its instant, rather than timeless, as in physics or chemistry. These observations are not merely, I think, about matters of fact in metaphysics and epistemology. Do they not point also to the very views that you would wish the patient to have of himself? Would you not regard the seizing of them in their full implication as among the criteria of practical success in therapy? Surely it is an aim of therapy to reduce the role of determinacy, to open and free the patient for choice. And a necessary condition, if not a sufficient one, for such reduction is that the patient should come to some such belief, or faith rather, in himself. Is this not part of what you wish, yourselves, to communicate?

There is another curious aspect about the facts in which we deal. It was implicit in my remark on the place of faith in therapy. Patently, facts emerge from the infinite flux of reality *as facts*, only in virtue of our interests. What may have been true with reference to falling apples from before time was becomes a "fact" only when someone implicated directly

or vicariously in a line of action needs to establish what the facts are to permit the activity to go on or build up.

The most important human facts, as Polyani says, only appear in passionate conviction and commitment, which, of course, lies beyond mere interest. Much more: the facts are *constituted* by the passionate commitment. This is not quite Berkeley's problem of the tree in the quad, but very near to it and much more credible. A love-object does not exist except in virtue of our love toward it. As a hunk of matter or an animal or even a person it may exist independently; but as a love-object it is whole and entire the creature of our passion. Similarly, justice exists and is real, so far and only so far as men are devoted and dedicated to it. It, too, is literally the creature of their passion, as, I suggest, is everything we care for or ought to care for. As we give our passion rein, we people a Universe that is otherwise empty of objects worthy of our interest.

Inquiry into human affairs, or reporting about them, cannot therefore be "objective" or "detached" or unimpassioned if it is not to miss the very things we set forth to seek. Inquiry can be "disinterested," but that is very different. May I claim again that these views, if true, are not merely philosophical assertions, but crucial and decisive communicanda in therapy. Faith is neither mere knowledge nor belief, but belief wedded to passion: belief of a kind capable of self-confirmation, wedded to passion sufficient to tip the balance toward confirmation. And faith is surely the tendril on which life winds to light; failing faith, life fails of its vitality.

This brings me to another connected point, central to psychiatric practice, and distinguishing psychiatry again from all other medical specialties. Psychiatry is the only specialty in medicine in which the theory of the subject is itself the remedy or a substantial part of the remedy. It is as though the surgeon were to cut open the patient with his theories and suture him with his hypotheses. The surgeon doesn't; you do. Inescapably, your patient gets better or worse, by coping with your view of himself, of man, of society, of reality, of what is "appropriate" and "inappropriate." Your theories and commitments, taken as a unity, are the cast and splints within which and upon which, if at all, psychic limbs are sufficiently straightened to permit natural or better-than-natural growth to be resumed. Indeed, transcending the analogy, the cast may become bone of the patient's bone. So your theory about man and your moral position are not just "basic" to psychiatry; they are "in" and "are" psychiatry. This truth also is, I trust, a communicandum of therapy.

I suppose I cannot continue without touching upon the matter of health and disease, since it is concern with these that distinguishes you among the other "caretakers," as Erich Lindemann has happily called them. Even in the biological order, the terms are hard enough to define. In the moral order the difficulty is even greater. In biology we usually have readily available, well-founded criteria of normative performance for the biological class of which our specimen is a sample. By a disease we mean any long-standing process that grossly militates against such performance—if the process is economically remediable. (If it is not economically remediable, we call it a defect.) Veterinarians are thus able to act with relative certainty and uncomplicatedness. Even a paediatrician dealing, *qua* biologist, with an age-sex-height-weight problem in a child has relatively little difficulty. When we as men seek to deal with men as men a host of problems arise. Every previous criterion loses its simplicity.

In reference to the moral order we can define a normative process, but we cannot see its end because nothing is visible except as we are in it, and the end retires and enlarges like an expanding horizon as we advance. The normative process is one of socialization, followed or accompanied by trans-socialization. The pre-socialized, potential person, brought into a set of relationships with actual living, loving persons, is caught up in a meaningful role in a presently ongoing complex of social acts, and is introduced to and made at home in a culture. This is stage one. Some never get so far. Some do in a fashion, but fall back or fall out. Some go farther, and this is stage two. This is the stage or process in which one's relations to particular and living persons are transcended: not thus devalued but given increased value and meaning. This is the stage in which the role assigned is transformed and transfigured by reference to a view of the universe, and hence not simply accepted as assigned by "society." Neither Riesman's gyroscope of superego nor radar of peer-group reference largely guides action. The culture is transcended, ceases to be the placenta of psychological life, and becomes a domain for aesthetic or ethical or other value-giving operation. The result is not merely transcendence of but change and enrichment of the culture, without limit. This view at least leads away from the moral dilemmas and ambiguities of operation of an adjustment psychiatry—a fit servant only of a totalitarian state.

But if this is the normative process (the process of being caught up into an actual and also an ideal society), surely not everything that falls short of it is to be labelled disease or defect, at least in the sense that it

falls into the psychiatrist's particular sphere of concern or area of operation. How we are to draw a working definition of "disease," from such a statement of the ideal, requires that we turn for a moment to consider the relation of ideals to action.

A number of obvious things may be said at once. The want of a clear ideal is one way to self-destruction. The wrong relation to or conception of the role of the ideal is another. Unguided action is self-defeating. Action directed merely to momentary melioration is unsatisfying. What an ideal should do is to define a structure and establish an order with reference to what exists and what does not yet exist. Action directed toward achievement of an ideal all at once—or indeed toward everything it implies, indifferently and in any order—implies at worst paralysis and at best diminution of attainable goods. Hence counsels of perfection are counsels of despair.

We must therefore unquestionably do first things first. We must seek to remove present, blatant, manifest, remediable evils before we seek to bring into being remoter potential goods. We may *say* with W.H.O. that we are dedicated to health as a positive, ideal state rather than a mere non-negative condition. We may cherish and be cherished by such a vision. But it is to be noted that under that mandate they have gone off to deal first and energetically with yaws, TB, malaria, and malnutrition.

One additional reason for orderly advance in the field of mental health is the very dynamic character of the norm, already alluded to. It seems obvious, but it needs saying, that every gain in "mental health" opens to greater clarity the psychic eye that may see and define what ideal "mental health" is. The norm thus moves, enlarges, and in a sense becomes more distant as we move toward it. This view both implies and assumes what I mean to imply and assume: an infinite moral space which is man's natural and inescapable home. The problem is how to live in it, duly awed but not so overawed as to lose the capacity for present expansion into it. A clear image of what is involved is not so much (or not only) a matter of progress in thinking about it as of progress in the achievement of it.

What are the most blatant remediable evils, I must leave to you to determine. (It is not obvious that mental illness, so-called, is the number one enemy in your field.) But that you must order your enemies, and adjust your strategy and logistics to that order, I do not doubt. I am only made uneasy by statements that indicate it is time to shift our attention from disease cure, palliation, mitigation, or prevention to the realm of

"positive mental health." Only a part of my concern stems from the lack of clarity attaching to the notion.

There is a deeper difficulty lurking in such ideas, one pointed to in the realm of politics long ago by Karl Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. He makes out, I believe, an altogether convincing case. He maintains that when the State seeks to go beyond the task of removing or preventing present blatant evils on to the establishment of the good life for its citizenry, their freedom and the openness of the society fall first victims to the attempt. Since this freedom and openness is to me a more general good than any good the State might seek, the State's claims to eminent domain everywhere, even if beneficent, cannot be countenanced. What is true for the super-parental figure, the State, is, I think, true in the everyday life of everyday parents, and for you who operate in between. We are gardeners not sculptors, in the figure of Homer Lane, one of your illustrious predecessors. We uproot weeds, we loosen soil, we remove obstacles to growth; we do not push and pull the living substance into neater shapes.

I believe, then, that while you are obligated to remember, to be guided by, to be passionately committed to maximum, open, wholly ideal norms of health—and to make that passionate dedication visible—you are warranted in interference, especially autogenous or unsolicited interference, only to remedy or avert or mitigate gross and obvious evil. This remark may not be nearly as trivial as it sounds. I have heard at least one planner in recent months lay claim to the role of trustee for a new and not very clear utopia. I have heard more than one psychiatrist assert the same. I have heard at least one proposal for merging the two roles. And I am not unfrightened as I hear echoes in these dreams of the moral foundations that every would-be autocrat is forced to lay down for his legitimation.

This brings me to an attempt to restate the criterion for psychiatric success. I asked one of the great men in your field, this summer, how he knew when he had succeeded with a boy. In a language typical for him, he answered cryptically and profoundly "Vulnerability, I suppose." What he meant became clear as the conversation proceeded. A boy who was "better" was a more voluntarily "open" boy, a boy not frozen or carapaced in rigid defenses, a boy who could and would be willing to be wounded again for the sake, presumably, of a good greater than mere security. I am drawn to that view.

But what *is* that greater good for which we have a right to ask that a man should be willing to be wounded? Perhaps it is the same good that,

in another sense, is said to render him invulnerable. It must not only be a reward-in-prospect sufficient to make vulnerability tolerable, but a reward-in-retrospect that makes any and every further advance in this direction possible. What is that good? It has many names, but an anthropologist's term will serve. We may call it "kinship." The opposite of kinship is "alienation," and when psychiatrists were called "alienists" (even if for another reason) the core of their mission might have been more clearly implicit in their title. As you know, you as psychiatrists are first (and often, sole) kin to the most alien; you are also the means whereby these are transformed with diminishing alienation into a kinship, greater without limit.

The notion of kinship excludes the necessity or transcends the limits of adjustment and "fitting in." Kinship not only permits and tolerates otherwise intolerable differences, it values them because it refers all differences not just to the two-point "interpersonal relation" involved, but to a third point, the family, which orders the other two in the realm of value. The appropriate third point of reference for patient and psychiatrist is never necessarily or ever exclusively the existent family, society, or social order. Indeed, these function, in the realm of value, as instances and embodiments merely of that moral order and that wider fellowship to which they point—the dead, the living, those who may yet live, and those who can only be imagined in the quickened heart. It is alienation from *that* fellowship and order that is, I hazard, not merely the cause, but the criterion, of the sickness psychiatrists seek to combat. And the criterion for their success is not that where id reigns ego shall be, but that where alienation ruled kinship shall triumph.

It will be obviously implicit to many of you that no man can effectively recall another into such kinship in virtue of mere knowledge about it. We cannot call others into a kinship not our own. I said earlier that right knowledge is in psychiatry your essential tool. I am now saying that what you *are* is equally essential. This is so not only because what you are is a measure of your capacity to use what you know. It is true because in matters human what we know and what we are are not separable and different. The illusion that they can be is one master-illusion with which psychiatry deals. The future of psychiatry is thus inseparable from the one process by which psychiatrists and those they affect grow without limit into knowledge quickened by passion, and passion given form by knowledge.

RICHARD FOSTER

Hamlet and the Word

There are many mysteries contained in Poetry, which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits, it should be abused.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Hamlet has been such a mystery as Sir Philip speaks of—the mystery of its hero as a man and of its meaning as a poem. Within the play-poem itself is the mystery's motive and aura: the motive, as Francis Fergusson has said, of finding and destroying the "hidden imposthume" poisoning Claudius' Denmark, and the aura, to nearly everyone in the play, of Hamlet's inscrutable language of gesture and word. Those who have felt that Shakespeare is hiding occult truths under his surfaces of words, though they may not be sure what the truths are, have been right in their feeling about the nature of *Hamlet* in particular. For what it is, in addition to being "about" a multiplicity of things, is an articulation of the mystery of the Word in the country of profanation.

There was once a golden age of Denmark, at least in Hamlet's imagination, and that is what counts. This was the Denmark of the elder Hamlet, who, like a hero out of epic, met and conquered the elder Fortinbras in single combat, and who, joined with his Eve-like Gertrude, makes in the mind of Hamlet an image of heroic honour joined with ideal love. Hamlet remembers his parents mythically (Hyperion and Niobe) and himself in the image of childhood innocence, carried on the back of the kindly and wise Yorick. In assaulting this image of harmony, wholeness, and virtue, Claudius, like Macbeth, has committed a compound sacrilege against the sacred orders of both family and state. As Claudius himself knows, his action "hath the primal eldest curse upon't, /A brother's murder" (III, iii, 37–8).

It is from the vantage point, then, of a "fallen" Denmark, visualized

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in the almost Miltonically hellish landscapes of the first and fourth scenes of Act I, that Hamlet looks back to the golden days of his father's reign. When Hamlet learns of the murder, his response to the circumstances around him, which up to that time has been mere disgust and yearning, almost immediately goes beyond the technicality of blood revenge. The ghost's commandment, based on the simple laws of an unpolluted heroic code, is revenge only. Hamlet's response is that he must cure a disease of state, bring to order a disjointed time—that he must perform not only a familial or tribal, but a metaphysical or even cosmic task; it is a complicated, sophisticated, essentially skeptical response, the response of a fallen, though aspiring sensibility.

The state of innocence; the fall into darkness and ignorance; redemption through suffering, grace-given knowledge, and obedience—this mythic, or Christian, structure of human history is duplicated in the materials of Danish history in the play: the vision of a world of heroic innocence presided over by Hamlet's father and mother; the actually fallen world of Claudius' Denmark, with its broken natural, social, and moral orders; the aspirant world of redemptive possibility represented in Hamlet's perceptiveness, vigorous intelligence, and wholeness of sensibility.

Eye, Tongue, and Hand (or Sword) are a triad of emblems that crop up frequently in Shakespeare's plays as an implicit, and I suppose habitually and traditionally felt, image of the soul's faculties: Intellect, Feeling, Will. Since the Fall destroyed the natural harmony of these faculties (note that Polonius, mistrusting their *natural* workings, begins his advice to Laertes with the behest, "Give thy thoughts no tongue, /Nor any unproportion'd thought his act"), it is through the Word, the given power of sacred truth acknowledged in human volition, that redemption from the effects of the Fall are promised. Radiating out from this central religious trope of the Word as the source of order and redemption for the disordered and fallen nature of man is that complex pattern of Renaissance analogizing of the artisan of language to prophet or deity, of his art to revelation, and of the condition of language at large to the spiritual condition of the race to which he brings his message. Thomas Wilson, for example, in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553) sees the pattern of man's original fall and redemption, and their successive re-enactments in human history, in terms of human language and divine Word. God's original gift to man of "reason" (Eye) was damaged with the fall, so that "none did anything by reason, but most did what they could by manhood"

(Hand). Wilson's account of a world where the natural function of moral intelligence has been displaced by will is as follows:

> None remembered the true observation of Wedlock; none tendered the education of their children; laws were not regarded; true dealing was not once used. For virtue, vice bare place, for right and equity, might used authority. . . . And thus for lack of skill, and for want of grace, evil so prevailed that the Devil was most esteemed.

This has the same intent as Ulysses' more sophisticated analysis of the fallen and decaying world of *Troilus and Cressida* in his speech on "degree," and in these less well-known, but perhaps more vividly symptomatic words to Nestor on intelligence *versus* force in the conduct of war:

> They tax our policy and call it cowardice,
> Count wisdom as no member of the war,
> Forestall prescience, and esteem no act
> But that of hand. The still and mental parts
> That do contrive how many hands shall strike
> When fitness calls them on, and know by measure
> Of their observant toil the enemies' weight—
> Why, this hath not a finger's dignity.
> They call this bed-work, mapp'ry, closet-war;
> So that the ram that batters down the wall,
> For the great swinge and rudeness of his poise,
> They place before his hand that made the engine,
> Or those that with the fineness of their souls
> By reason guide his execution. (I, iii, 197–210)

While there seems to be no hope for Ulysses' world, Thomas Wilson records that during the interregnum of vice and force, God "stirred up his faithful and elect to persuade all men to society," gave them the ability to "see the natures of men," and "granted them the gift of utterance." Since it is through this "gift of utterance" that men's moral natures were repaired and the sustaining orders of society were established, the custodian of words thus becomes the custodian of holy power. "He that is among the reasonable of all most reasonable," Wilson writes, "and among the witty of all most witty, and among the eloquent of all most eloquent, him think I among all men not only to be taken for a singular man but rather to be counted for half a god." "Half a god" because Tongue, the organ of truth and power, by once again connecting, as in a current of natural feeling, Eye with Hand, re-creates in the Fall-damaged soul the redemptive possibility of harmony and wholeness.

Wilson's metaphors are confirmed widely in Renaissance criticism: Puttenham, for example, analogizes the poet to God in that he makes whole worlds out of the nothings of words, and Sidney looks back toward antiquity for confirmation as he names the poet not only "maker," but "Diviner," "Fore-seer," and "Prophet." And from reactionaries like Gosson to reformers like Bacon excesses and corruptions in the arts of the word were seen as grave symptoms of corruption in the very soul of the age itself. Even Sidney's *Apology*, a great defense of art against moralists and pragmatists, was also a conscious ministering to the sickness in the art itself—not only, as he wrote, to instruct others, "but only finding myself sick among the rest, to show some one or two spots of the common infection, grown among the most part of Writers." The symptoms were inkhorning and scholastic quibbling and neologism and Euphuistic false elegance; and in the theatres, fustian and hollow rant. The symptoms were verbal, but the disease was moral and spiritual: a disorder and misrule in the mind, a decay in the sensibility of an age. It is the disease of Claudius' Denmark, where understanding and action, meaning and word, have been stricken apart by crime at the heart of state.

At the beginning of the play Hamlet preaches against mere shows of feeling—the outward *form* of mourning assumed out of custom and practicality by Claudius and Gertrude—and contrasts the "customary" mourning suit of black with the truth of "that within," which is the grief of the spirit. Such lying gesture, which is the very substance, as Francis Fergusson has shown, of the sustaining rituals of Claudius' tainted reign, is a type of false language, and its significance is extended and confirmed in the pervasive corruption of the word all around Hamlet. Polonius' characteristic speech, for example, in contrast with Hamlet's full, free, and witty eloquence, is the stock language of cliché and adage, the standard rhetoric of popular moral custom. And when he seeks to be clever in his speech, as in the second scene of Act II when he punningly announces the love-madness of Hamlet to Claudius and Gertrude ("That he is mad 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity,/And pity 'tis, 'tis true—a foolish figure"), he is at best grotesque; at worst, considering the circumstances, shockingly inapropos. Laertes is similarly full of the automatic rhetoric of stock moralism in his parting words to Ophelia, and just as she lightly sees his emptiness in the emptiness of his words ("Do not as some ungracious pastors do"), Hamlet furiously accuses him of "mouthing" and "rant"—gigantism of

words and nullity of substance and feeling—when at Ophelia's funeral Laertes makes the gross and empty gesture of leaping into her grave. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are living lies, and in II, ii Hamlet asks why they have come to court ("Were you not sent for . . . ? Come, come deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak"), receiving the answer from Guildenstern, "Why, what should we say, my Lord?" Hamlet reads in their evasive looks the "confession" that they were sent for, and he begs them, in the sacred names of love and friendship, to be true with him. Their untruth to Hamlet is, as Hamlet's appeal indicates, a kind of sacrilege, a betrayal of "that within"; but because they are in essence trivial half-fools, their fate, like Polonius', is more farcical than terrible.

From the King and Queen's having made a "rhapsody," as Hamlet says, of the marriage vows, to the mute savagery of the people, who are capable of nothing but "inexplicable dumb-shows and noise," the state of Denmark is shot through with corruptions of the word. There is no spirit in the king's mechanical prayer of repentance ("My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: / Words without thoughts never to heaven go"); no meaning in the crazy verbal foppery of courtly Osric ("Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and, out of an habit of encounter, a kind of yeasty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out"); no propriety in the sullen, evasive punning of the gravedigger in the presence of the idea of death and its ultimate dominion over the heroism of Alexander, the wisdom of Yorick, and finally the beauty and purity of Ophelia; and when the "maimed" funeral rite of Ophelia moves across the stage, his wilful irreverence will echo in the air like an ugly sacrilege. The gravedigger's insolence and heavy wit is a sign to Hamlet of a profound decadence, like the decay of "degree" expounded by Ulysses, in a whole age and a whole people. "By the Lord, Horatio," he muses, "this three years I have took note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe." And it is significantly a symptom of *language* in which Hamlet sees the meaning.

Hamlet is a seer among the blind, and his ability to say the truth arises from this capacity to see the truth. Claudius appears to be a cheerful, fair-minded and "reasonable" man and, on the basis of I, ii, a strong and capable leader of state; and his court presents an image of light and

harmony in its happy celebration of his marriage to Gertrude. Hamlet, of course, sees the truth of the marriage—the haste and the legal incest, that no one else, even Gertrude, seems to see. He literally sees, instead, *lust*—another instance of the rule of Hand over Eye—insofar as Gertrude has forgotten "Hyperion" (the elder Hamlet) for a "satyr" (Claudius). And in the comedy of Polonius one ought to feel, I think, as Hamlet clearly feels, a certain element of the disgusting and horrible; for though Polonius is a senile fool and corrupt worldling, he nevertheless performs, in his recognized capacities of elder, father, and advisor to state, the roles of actual seer and truth-speaker in the world of the play. As Claudius is the focus of authority, Polonius is the focus of integrity and wisdom. The shallowness and cynicism of his famous advice to Laertes, including, if context has any bearing on meaning, the often quoted last lines, is the measure of his wisdom. And the quality of his integrity is shown in his hollow relationship with his son, and in his philosophy of the lie as touchstone of truth. As the apparent harmony of the Danish court is based upon an actuality of crime, so in the dependent world of which the court is centre and soul, untruth has become truth, truth untruth.

This condition is rendered with comic vitality when Ophelia tells her father of Hamlet's sudden visit to her closet in strange disarray, "as if he had been loosed out of hell/To speak of horrors . . ." (II, i). She describes what amounts to an exaggerated and parodic enactment, by Hamlet, of the stock distraught lover: " . . . He raised a sigh so piteous and profound/ That it did seem to shatter all his bulk/And end his being." Though Ophelia seems only puzzled and frightened, Polonius makes the instantaneous and unshakable deduction that Hamlet has gone mad of unrequited love. In the next scene he runs to Claudius and Gertrude with the absurd "love-letter" to Ophelia, and they are quite ready to be convinced by its entirely unHamlet-like inarticulacy and doggerel. Because Denmark is a fallen and blinded world, it is the mute parody, the inexpressive stock gesture, the depthless "outward show" that convinces, and that makes such a corrupt fool as Polonius feel so superbly perceptive. This is why the polluted marriage of Claudius and Gertrude is accepted without demur while the emergent ideal love of Hamlet for Ophelia is suspected, apparently from its beginning, as a matter of courtly lechery. This is also why throughout the play Hamlet's obvious, often blatantly absurd, role-playing so easily dupes most of the other characters. And this is why Hamlet's genuine capacity for direct

action, first displayed with certainty in his encounter with the ghost, must express itself, in contrast with Claudius' pragmatic action-taking, in indirect actions of wit, or intelligence, or aesthetic acuity. And above all this is why the play *Hamlet* is the greatest repository of soliloquy—which is the fulness of truth uttered of necessity to the secret and isolated self—in the literature of the stage. The corrupt and disordered moral order of Hamlet's world requires that his capacities for knowledge, utterance, and act be camouflaged or hidden, or else diverted into indirections.

Ophelia's soliloquy on Hamlet—"the courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword"—is a description of his unique wholeness in a world of fragmented and distorted human natures (III, i). The speech is a recognition of Hamlet's unique value. But it is also an unconscious description of the paradoxical nature of the role he is fated to play, and of its necessarily tragic outcome for him as a man. I think it is both justifiable and necessary to sustain this distinction between Hamlet's *role* in the action and his experience as a human being. His role is to cure, renew, bring light to his world by means of the power of the Word vouchsafed to him. And I should want to argue that Hamlet's famous "delaying," his holding back instinctively from a purely mechanical and secular undertaking of revenge, is an expressive concomitant of his being the half-unwitting agency of a greater power, the power of divine purgation and redemption. Hamlet's unconscious skill is to say the truth—to utter—and the revenge duty of letting blood is the conflicting conscious responsibility that finally makes him, as a human being, tragic, at the very moment that he is most fulfilled as a divine agent. In an order of lies, truth is chaos; and in the purgative upheaval brought about by his speaking the truth, he is doomed by his necessary human complicity with the human condition.

Hamlet's role as messianic custodian of the Word is manifested not only by the motif of language so far discussed, but also by certain ancient and traditional root images either playing through the action, or focused upon it in such a way as to seem to define its "allegorical" meaning. Hamlet's sustained "antic disposition," for example, is in the ancient tradition of the madman as seer and prophet, and it is paralleled by the actual madness of Ophelia, the lyric Cassandra of the play, who utters her final tragic knowledge in the language of flowers. And Hamlet's public language of hint, dark wit, riddle, and paradox is the traditionally cryptic and baffling, but pregnant, language of the oracle. From Horatio's

response (I, v, 133)—"These are but wild and whirling words, my Lord"—to Hamlet's hysterical irony after having spoken with the ghost, the other characters continually express both their bafflement and their sense of deep and hidden significance in his words. The crowing of the cock, finally, in the first scene of the play, is both an emblem of Denmark's need and a prophecy of Hamlet's function. The beneficently supernatural associations of the cock in both Christian and folk tradition are expounded at length by Horatio,[1] and just as the cock's utterance dispels the night and the ghost, Hamlet, who alone has the power to make the ghost speak, eventually dispels the darkness of Denmark by bringing to it the word of truth.

The play within the play, as managed by Hamlet, is the climactic figuring forth in word and deed of Denmark's moral predicament, the purgative annunciation which has been Hamlet's destiny from the beginning. In the famous soliloquy "Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" (II, ii), Hamlet explores the irony that he must keep silence while the player, who has spoken Aeneas' description of the death of Priam, can utter so feelingly, even to tears, the fiction of a son's response to a father's "slaughter." It is expression, not action, that Hamlet envies in the player's performance. What would he do, Hamlet asks, if this player had "the motive and the cue for passion that I have?"

> He would drown the stage with tears
> And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
> Make mad the guilty and appal the free.
> Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
> The very faculty of eyes and ears.
> Yet I,
> A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
> Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
> And can say nothing.

He accuses himself of cowardice, curses his uncle, and then chides himself for pausing in his task of revenge to, "like a whore, unpack my heart with words, and fall a-cursing. . . ." This is the "conscious" Hamlet of the revenge motive speaking. But it is to expression, rather than action, that the "subconscious" Hamlet instinctively turns; and the idea of the play as vehicle of purgative truth is born:

> I have heard
> That guilty creatures sitting at a play
> Have by the very cunning of the scene

> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaimed their malefactions;
> For murder though it have no tongue will speak
> With most miraculous organ.

A play is literally the "speaking picture" that Sir Philip Sidney said poetry in general is. A play is, as it were, a total actualization of the incipient power of the word alone. Claudius' susceptibility to the word is established in the immediately succeeding scene (III, i) when Polonius, in another of his "assays of bias," has Ophelia read a book as she walks in order to dramatize her solitariness and thus encourage Hamlet to address her intimately. "We are oft to blame in this," Polonius observes, with characteristic blindness to the meaning his words have for the lying appearance that he has arranged, "that with devotion's visage /And pious action we do sugar o'er/The devil himself." Claudius responds in an aside,

> O, 't is true!
> How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
> The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
> Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
> Than is my deed to my most painted word.

The "miraculous organ" here is the witlessly and mechanically delivered moral platitude of a senile fool; and in its instantaneous effect upon Claudius it functions as a meaningful prelude to the almost literally miraculous organ of the play to come. The play is on the surface an entertainment. And it is far removed from "life" in its stylized, old-fashioned flatness—as flat and stylized, say, as Claudius' prayer or Polonius' mechanical moralisms or Hamlet's parody of love-distraction. All of these have the flatness and stylizing of *ritual.* And the play, similarly, as Francis Fergusson has convincingly argued, is a ritual, a counter-ritual opposed to the empty sustaining rituals of corrupted Denmark, with Hamlet, in his continual choric asides, as its proprietary priest, the Logos behind its fictive action.

The whole of Act III, in fact, functions to set off the play as the "miraculous organ" of Hamlet's divinely given power, and the motif of the Word is more densely manifest here than anywhere else. Hamlet's deeply traditional conception of the theatre, to begin with, "whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure," is profoundly

ethical, ultimately even religious. The pressures of the full context of *Hamlet* make Hamlet's instructions to the players more than incidental stage criticism, more, even, than the worried, intense advice to potential incompetents that Dover Wilson sees in the passage.[2] When Hamlet cautions them against over-acting and weak feeling, he is preparing his actors in the zeal and truth proper to a sacred moment, a truly terrible occasion in which a human soul is to be tried. He is requiring that they show, in their fictive action, a respect for truth and a reverence for the soul of man, that they be "true" to the moral and spiritual realities of the human condition that their speech and gesture is meant to reflect. The basic instruction is propriety, wholeness, and harmony—the integrity of action and word which is the principle everywhere violated in the "real" world of the play.[3] It is perhaps relevant to observe that just as the function of poetry, as conceived by Sidney and other Renaissance critics, was analogous to the function of Scripture, the function of the drama may be felt here to be analogous to the function of sacred ritual.

The whole scene is pregnant with details that affirm the power of the word and declare its immanence in the play. Before the play Hamlet predicts to Horatio that if Claudius is the murderer, "one speech" (which Hamlet has composed) will "unkennel" his "occulted guilt." After the dumbshow, the laconic Prologue begs of the audience, "your hearing patiently," and Hamlet wryly says this means the players "cannot keep counsel, they'll tell all." With the play under way, Hamlet's interpretive ironies draw from Ophelia the remark that, "You are as good as a chorus, my Lord." In such a context even the pouring of Luciano's poison into the *ear* of the player king has its special confirmatory significance. And finally, it is only after Hamlet chorically declares the import of this act ("You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife") that Claudius rises in fear. And that Claudius' outcry, "Give me some light," is the traditional metaphor for knowledge, and that it is seconded by the cry of Polonius, the foolish wise man, for "Lights, lights, lights!", seems to say that the light of truth, now uncovered, is for Claudius and all his dependent powers and executants a blindness and a darkness.

As Claudius is plunged into darkness and confusion by the truth, Hamlet becomes suddenly free, exhilarated, openly eloquent. Because Claudius' guilt confessed itself in his flight "on the talk of poisoning," Hamlet cries out to Horatio, "I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound." When Guildenstern, on his mission for Gertrude, asks "a word with you,"

Hamlet answers with gay irony, "Sir, a whole history." He has already called for music, which means not only joy but also harmony and order: the harmony and order of moral reality, of the state, and of his own whole and harmonious sensibility, which under the pressures of his terrible knowledge and duty has sometimes been, as Ophelia said, "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh." There is much wordplay, and wordplay about words, in Hamlet's exchange with the blank, uncomprehending quisling, Guildenstern; and Hamlet concludes with what is in effect a moral lecture upon the sacredness of the individual soul and the sacrilege of playing upon it—what he has himself been forced to do by the norms of Claudius' fallen world—as if it were only a *thing*. Hamlet's analogue is music. He asks Guildenstern to play the pipe, which played knowingly "will discourse most eloquent music." Guildenstern says he cannot play, and Hamlet drives home his principle:

> You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think that I am easier to be played on than a pipe?

The speech reinforces all the strains of meaning found in the play scene—the sense of Hamlet's special power, of the play as a holy and terrible rite, and of the effect of the power and its expression in the rite as miraculously purgative, preparatory, and regenerative.

A detail that I believe to be very critical, perhaps the most critical of all in the play scene, is the dumbshow and the response—or failure of response—of the stage audience to it. Dover Wilson would have the scene played so that Claudius is attending to Hamlet rather than to the dumbshow. But if the motif of the Word is observed, and perhaps a little accentuated, in the performance, such an indirection becomes not only unnecessary, but irrelevant. That none of the assembled court understands the meaning of the dumbshow is, of course, another symbolic manifestation, just before the deluge, of the blindness that has come over the court with its fall in the crime of Claudius. But more pointed still, Claudius' silence, as a final, almost ghastly moment when the truth has been enacted but not proclaimed, throws all the weight of expectation forward upon the word to be spoken. It is a transfixed moment, Claudius enthralled on the brink of revelation, rapt, paralysed; and I should want it played so, before the terrible and holy truth—the deep vows falsely spoken, and the declarations, by Hamlet, of murder and unlawful love—is at last proclaimed.

At the end of the play scene, Hamlet, alone, prepares to confront his mother: "I will speak daggers to her, but use none." One of the rite's effects is to free him from the necessity to "hold my tongue," felt at the beginning of the play, about his mother's sexual guilt. As guilt has bred guilt, blindness bred blindness, now utterance breeds utterance, and truth truth. Hamlet's choice, on the way to his mother's room, not to kill Claudius foreshadows, in an almost emblematic scene, the power of the word as it is to be exhibited only a moment later in the scene with Gertrude. Hamlet has just seen and heard Claudius' oblique confession of guilt at the play, and now he witnesses him in the act of repentance preparatory to a possible absolution. Shall Hamlet, through his own exercise of the lesser power of the sword, let the full saving power of the Word pass to Claudius? This is the instinctive rationale of his "delay" at this moment. But though Claudius tries to pray, he succeeds only in making a hollow gesture, uttering an empty form of words. Why does the normally perceptive Hamlet fail to see what we are allowed to see at this moment? Part of the answer is that this is no public show by Claudius, as the texture of all his acts since the murder has been, but rather it is his private truth; and it is the measure of his damnation, and of the fullness with which he has recreated himself as a lie, that his hopeless emptiness, proven by the failure of his genuine attempt to pray, is not recognized by the inspired avenger who pursues him. The rest of the answer is that Hamlet's instrument is the word, and that having already brought into play its power to damn, he now has something much more vital to do—to apply to his mother, by means now of direct rather than indirect truth-speaking, its corresponding power to save.

Hamlet's interview with Gertrude has its parallels with the preceding dramas and quasi-dramas, particularly in the initially destructive effects, leading to larger and ultimately creative effects, that it brings about. Polonius is at first the audience here, and his death is the death of the fool-wise man and his pernicious sustaining of folly and evil. And that Hamlet kills him speedily and with almost careless humour, believing for the moment that he has slain the king and thus fulfilled the letter of his duty, seems to suggest further that he is moved by a greater purpose than blood revenge. This bit of casual slaughter is but an emblematic prelude, a transition, like the earlier dumbshow, to the speaking picture to follow: "A bloody deed," Hamlet says with deep irony, "—almost as bad, good mother,/As kill a king, and marry with his brother."

QUEEN. As kill a king!
HAMLET. Ay, lady, it was my word.

Gertrude now becomes the attendant audience, ready to be played upon by the power of Hamlet's presentation:

Peace, sit you down.
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff,
If damned custom have not braz'd it so
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Hamlet is saying that his words have sensible being that, if she is not too corrupted by physical excess, should touch her feelings. Why does he "wag [his] tongue/In noise so rude against me?" the Queen demands of Hamlet. He answers that she has committed an act—legal incest, and perhaps adultery, with her husband's murderer—that violates the integrity of act and meaning, the crime against the word which is central to the play as a whole: it is a deed that

makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths; O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words.

Hamlet confronts her next with portraits of his father and his uncle, making the first, with words, an image of godlike grandeur, and the second an image of disease and blight. "Have you eyes?" he shouts, making her see. He builds an image then of Gertrude as a being all of "sense," lust smothering all reason, and she cries out, "O Hamlet, speak no more! Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul . . . ." At his reductive imagery of animality and lust she cries out again, "O speak no more!/ These words like daggers enter in my ears."

The effect of the ghost's entrance just at this point is to break the imaginative intensity being represented in this most chilling of scenes, and by so doing to underscore once again the power of the word in Hamlet's mouth. Like Claudius at the dumbshow, and perhaps throughout the play scene, Gertrude is transfixed by the truth represented to her. She is in danger because, as the dagger image tells us, the word has come near to its slaying power, and the ghost instructs Hamlet to lift the "amazement," to release her, again by means of the power of the word:

> O step between her and her fighting soul.
> Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
> Speak to her Hamlet.

Hamlet's humane word ("How is it with you lady?") breaks the spell of truth, and Gertrude is normal once again, which means blind. Hamlet commands her to see the ghost ("Look you how pale he glares!/His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,/Would make them capable"), but the sundering of form and meaning in the fallen mind of Gertrude makes her incapable. Hamlet's reason, to her, is madness, his seeing "ecstasy." "Ecstasy!" he cries. "It is not madness/That I have utter'd: bring me to the test, /And I the matter will re-word." He says it is not his madness but her trespass that "speaks," then instructs her to "confess yourself to Heaven;/Repent what's past, avoid what is to come." He is speaking of salvation through confession, repentance, and regeneration. Reporting Polonius' death to Claudius at the beginning of Act IV, Gertrude says that her son is "mad as the sea and wind when both contend"; but whether this is obedience to Hamlet's command not to reveal that he is "mad in craft," or simply final evidence of Gertrude's unredeemed blindness, we cannot tell. The state of Gertrude's soul remains ambiguous at the end of the play, but the promise of salvation, the saving power of the word, has at least been offered through Hamlet.

The movement of the last two acts of the play is expressively chaotic. The focus is almost purely upon action, the sequence of eruptive events that, beginning with the death of Polonius, manifest the purgative power of truth. There is the misadventure of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the madness and drowning of Ophelia, the embroilment at her grave, and, of course, the terrible annihilating accidents of the fencing match that clear the way for the approaching Fortinbras. Through all this Hamlet is much of the time either off the scene or out of the limelight, and there is the sense even of his personality, as defined by the strains of his revenge obligation, fading, calming, dying away. It is as if his role as "miraculous organ" of truth and agency of the "divinities" that shape human ends through seeming accident were finished in the great crises of Act III. Now he is a mere man, to be swept away himself in the great tide of forces he has loosed. And yet, after the final scene's swirl of circumstance and accident has forced upon him the act of blood-letting that has been so long delayed, Hamlet, dying, still yearns above all for full utterance. He addresses the horror-stricken court, and by implication

the audience too, yearning for expression of all the personal and secret burdens and tortures that have been his through the whole action—all that the audience has heard and known with him in the private moments of soliloquy, moments which articulated not only his and Denmark's problems, but their implications as well for the human condition as a whole:

> You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
> That are but mutes and audience to this act,
> Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, Death,
> Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
> But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
> Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
> To the unsatisfied. . . .
> O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
> Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity a while
> And in this harsh world, draw thy breath in pain
> To tell my story.

A volley sounds from Fortinbras' forces—another kind of voice, a silencing voice—and Hamlet concludes, as if knowing at the last that his story will never be wholly known,

> But I do prophesy th' election lights
> On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice.
> So tell him, with th' occurents, more or less,
> Which have solicited—the rest is silence.

It is surely one of the most movingly ironic finishes in the literature of tragedy when Horatio shows how he will give utterance. It is the event merely, the skeleton of fact, the chronicle, that taciturn Horatio is capable of:

> And let me speak to th' yet unknowing world
> How these things came about: so shall you hear
> Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
> Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
> Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
> And, in this upshot, purposes mistook,
> Fall'n on th' inventors' heads: all this can I
> Truly deliver.

And all the rest, *everything*—Hamlet himself, his knowledge, his suffering, his power, the meaning which his intensity and perception and wholeness of vision brought to a morally meaningless world—"is silence."

What Shakespeare has made incarnate in *Hamlet* is the *mystery* of the word: the ambiguity of its power; the terror as well as the beauty potential in it; its capacity to destroy as well as to create, depending upon the agency that summons its power. All this is implied in Sir Philip Sidney's claim that ideas "lie dark" in the mind until the poet's image gives them the power to "strike," "pierce," and "possess the sight of the soul"; and in Thomas Wilson's declaration that "such force hath the tongue, and such is the tongue, and such is the power of eloquence and reason, that most men are forced even to yield in that which most standeth against their will"; and in Bacon's skeptical observation that "although we think we govern our words, and prescribe well, . . . yet certain it is that words, as a Tartar's bow, do shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest, and mightily entangle and pervert the judgment"; and even in Gosson's shrill cry, "Let us shut up our ears to poets, pipers, and players, pull our feet back from resort to theatres, and turn our eyes away from beholding of vanity."

There is an odd little moment in *Julius Caesar*, a strange commingling of farce and deep feeling, when a "Poet" bursts in upon Cassius and Brutus as they confer in Brutus' tent. The poet is, of course, an officious fool and a dreadful rhymster, but he wants to promote harmony between the generals, who he imagines are about to harm one another. Though Cassius begs patience, Brutus ejects him in anger with "What should the wars do with these jigging fools?" If, as I like to imagine, Shakespeare conceived this little scene as an ironic walk-on for himself, what would he see, and have us see, through the mask of his fool's disguise? This moment of rejection is properly, of course, a poet's moment; it is a moment full of the death of Portia and the announced death of Cicero; it is a moment of reunion between two friends, after an interim of contention and separation, in a bond of harmony stronger than ever; and it is a moment of deep communion and meditation on the eve of the greatest and most decisive battle of the war. Death, love, war—subjects for the poet's ceremony of words. But the poet is scorned and turned out, and he would see the audience's amusement at his rejection and hear their laughter. This is the last, the farcically reductive climax, of a series of such rejections in the play. Caesar, doomed and deaf, himself defective in the word, rejects the soothsayer as a "dreamer" and turns aside the teacher of rhetoric who would warn him of the plot against his life. Brutus shows his almost puritan distrust of the word in his desire to

keep Cicero out of the conspiracy, in his reluctance to share his heart, in words, with his wife, and in his ruling conviction that simple integrity, notwithstanding the power of the word over even himself in the mouth of worldly Cassius, is proof against all doubt, all force, all evil intention. The mobs that overrun Rome after Antony's great summoning of the power of the word (III, ii) mistakenly attack Cinna the poet in the belief that he is Cinna the senator, and when they find out who he is they tear him apart anyway "for his bad verses." Surely this is the symbolic death of Truth in Rome.

The cause of Brutus was fated because, like all puritanisms, its human exemplar was, if perfect, not whole. Brutus' tragedy was the tragedy of a saint, the tragedy of Rome the tragedy of a damned people. Brutus, believing in his purity that the soul's Eye can move to virtue the will's Hand without the Tongue's mediate power, was proud against the Word. And Rome violated, by "use," the Word's sanctity. Perhaps this is some of what Shakespeare saw from behind the mask of the rejected fool-poet. But as he looks out over the harsh, hilarious crowd that as it hungrily devours him holds him in contempt, and as he envisions the absent rational enemies of his craft honing the weapons of policy, he also, perhaps, foresees his Hamlet—messiah figure, light-bringer, whole man—who in the ambiguous triumph of his defeat is extinguished, like the artist, by the power that it is his gift to release, annihilated in the moment of his deepest fulfillment.

notes

1 Even the word *Cock* is a folk corruption of *God*. See the "By Cock" of Ophelia's bawdy song (IV, v, 62).

2 Hamlet's deep affection and respect for the players, as expressed in his scene of welcoming them to the court, seems to me to invalidate not only Wilson's notion that Hamlet doubts their abilities, but also the entire emphasis of his interpretation of the play within the play.

3 By Laertes and Polonius, for example. And that Polonius played Julius Caesar at the university has a very special complex of significances attached to it, especially if we remember Shakespeare's Caesar, the disabilities of age, the vacuous pomposities, the blind folly, and so on, and Polonius' not knowing that the fictive role is the measure of the actor's reality.

Review Articles

DARWIN'S HEIRS*

If Charles Darwin could have witnessed the one hundredth anniversary of *The Origin of Species*, he would surely have been astonished by the extent of the goings-on. Even before 1959, the centennial bandwagon was being assembled, and before the year was out few publishers, journals, or scientific bodies were not aboard. Books, essays, lectures, and symposia about Darwinism appeared in such numbers that one lost count. Some of these were obviously contrived to capitalize on the occasion. Others reflected a sincere desire to honour a great biologist and an epoch-making book. Of all the celebrations, however, the one which Darwin would probably have found most astonishing, not to say bewildering, was held at the University of Chicago from November 24 to 28, 1959. The record of this massive affair, a centennial to end all centennials, is now available in three handsome volumes. They contain not only tributes to the master, but also a detailed account of what his heirs have been doing in the past one hundred years. Altogether, it makes a remarkable story.

The idea of the centennial originated, we are told, with the editor of the present volumes, Professor Sol Tax of the department of anthropology at the University of Chicago. He provided much of the organizing drive, and became chairman of the celebration committee. During 1956 this committee invited some fifty scientists from various countries to participate. Their papers, written in the course of the next two years, are published in volumes I and II. At the centennial itself the scientists conducted a series of large panel discussions of topics arising from their papers. A verbatim report of these discussions, three papers on evolution and religion, the scripts of a couple of television interviews, and Sir Julian Huxley's convocation address, "The Evolutionary Vision," form the substance of volume III. The audience which listened to the discussions consisted of about 200 delegates, 2,500 registrants, and a great crowd of visitors. The main proceedings took place in the university's largest auditorium, Mandel Hall. But since it could accommodate less than half the total audience, extra halls with sound equipment had to be provided. The whole affair was a *tour de force* of organization such as must warm the heart of every administrator. Whether it would have warmed the heart of Charles Darwin is another matter.

There is no point in trying to summarize the multitudinous and often technical details

*See page 250 for a bibliography of books discussed in this article.

presented in the record of the centennial. Instead, I will make a few general remarks about the activities of Darwin's heirs, with special reference to the volumes under review.

Most people know that *The Origin of Species* was not the first book to discuss biological evolution. They are aware that the book's importance arises from the fact that it formulated for the first time a verifiable theory of the causes of evolution, and supported the theory by an extensive array of evidence. The foundations were thus laid for what Waddington calls "an intellectually coherent picture of the whole realm of living matter" (vol. I, 381). Since 1859, Darwin's theory and the evidence on which it rests have been greatly enlarged. Yet this enlargement has been a fairly continuous process in which very little of classical Darwinism had to be scrapped. When one recalls the relatively meagre amount of evidence Darwin had at his disposal, compared to what is now available, it seems remarkable that he should have got so many things right. Only a scientific genius could have managed it.

The enlargement of evolutionary theory has been chiefly due to developments in three areas of inquiry: paleontology, geo-chronology, and genetics. Paleontologists have added numerous items to the supply of fossil evidence, the most important being those which have to do with man's immediate precursors. The discoveries in Africa of the remains of "man-apes" (Australopithecines) from 1925 on have provided information about "Adam's ancestors" which was wholly lacking in Darwin's day. This information has thrown much light on the history of human evolution, although as L. S. B. Leakey points out in volume II, many phases of the history still have to be represented by question marks.

Evolutionary processes are by their very nature gradual. They need long stretches of time to produce changes in organisms. This fact was a thorn in the flesh to the Darwinians. For even after the Biblical chronology was discarded in favour of the first scientific estimates of the earth's age, insufficient time seemed to be available for the history of life to occur. Lord Kelvin's calculations showed that the earth must have been in a molten state some 40 to 100 million years ago. Yet even Darwin doubted whether so relatively limited a span could encompass the total course of evolution. To-day the situation has changed because geo-chronology is based on more accurate data derived from the investigation of radioactive isotopes. Experts are now agreed that the earth is vastly older than Kelvin thought, its age being of the order of 4,500 million years. Thus increased temporal scope for evolutionary processes has been provided, and the solution of phylogenetic problems rendered easier. Evolutionists now have plenty of time.

By far the most potent influence on evolutionary thinking has come from genetics. Classical Darwinism lacked adequate knowledge of the factors and laws of heredity. This was its Achilles' heel. After 1900, when Mendel's work was rescued from oblivion, the science of heredity forged ahead, and geneticists became the aristocrats of the biological world. At first they were unsympathetic or hostile to Darwinian theory. But during the last few decades a conceptual "break-through" has been achieved by which Darwinism has been expanded so as to incorporate the findings of genetics. The resulting doctrine is usually called "the synthetic theory of evolution." Its chief advocates, Muller,

Dobzhansky, Simpson, Mayr, Huxley, Stebbins, and Wright, all contribute to the centennial volumes. Indeed, their outlook dominated the proceedings.

This state of affairs has its dangers. Undoubtedly, the synthetic theory is a powerful explanatory doctrine, an impressive advance in our understanding of terrestrial evolution. But when it is presented as a complete and final account of things, more harm than good may be done. The first rule of reason, Charles Peirce insisted, is: "Do not block the way of inquiry." Advocates of the synthetic theory sometimes disregard this rule by talking as if they had made everything about the evolutionary process intelligible. They thereby set up a scientific roadblock. It is true that at the centennial a few voices were heard, notably those of Waddington and Olson, suggesting limitations in the orthodox doctrine. But might it not have been salutary to admit a real biological "maverick" to the proceedings and allow him to utter heresies? There are enough unsolved problems in this field to make unorthodox ideas desirable for a while longer.

Evolution since Darwin has spread its influence far beyond the borders of biology. This has happened in two general directions. On the one side, evolutionary thinking has penetrated into astronomy, geophysics, and biochemistry. On the other side, it has penetrated into anthropology, archaeology, and psychology. The effect is to produce a comprehensive theory which is scarcely distinguishable from a kind of metaphysics. Thus Julian Huxley repeats in these volumes his favourite theme that evolution is a cosmic process which has generated novelty, variety, and increase of organization in an irreversible sequence. The process began with the inorganic domain, out of which emerged the biological, to be followed by the emergence of the psycho-social. In short, "all reality can be regarded in one aspect as evolution" (vol. I, 18). The shade of Darwin might not applaud this statement, but the shade of Herbert Spencer certainly would—provided a footnote were attached to indicate that reality *per se* is unknowable!

Some such Spencerian conception must have been in the minds of the centennial organizers when they invited non-biologists to appear on the programme. One of the liveliest participants was the astronomer, Shapley. He needled his colleagues with the charge of parochialism, suggesting "that terrestrial biological evolution is but a rather small affair, a complicated side-show in the large evolutionary operation that the astronomer glimpses" (vol. I, 23). We are quite unjustified if we think that the earth is the only possible abode of life. There are millions of stars (Shapley says "a hundred thousand million billion"!) identical in size, luminosity, and chemistry to our sun. An enormous number must have planets like the earth which could sustain living things. Life on other worlds is thus a virtual certainty. This conclusion is supported by what the two biochemists, Gaffron and Evans, have to say about the physical composition of organisms and their evolution from inorganic materials. The question of the origin of life is much discussed in biochemical circles nowadays. The gap between the animate and the inanimate appears to be closing, particularly since the striking Miller-Urey experiments a few years ago. Further work along these lines can be expected to lead quite soon (Gaffron cautiously says "in less than a thousand years") to the artificial synthesis of primitive living entities. Such an event will offer support to the doctrine of

cosmic evolution by showing that the animate is derivable from the inanimate under conditions comparable to those which once prevailed on the earth and presumably on other planets in the universe. At this level, therefore, the prospects look bright.

Elsewhere they are less so. We are still a long way from understanding the connections between biological and psycho-social or cultural evolution. Many of the problematic issues in this area are surveyed by the archaeologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and neurophysiologists who contribute to volume II. From a philosophical standpoint two issues appear particularly crucial. The first is that of giving an adequate evolutionary explanation of human speech and language. The second is that of giving an adequate evolutionary explanation of conscious awareness and self-consciousness in *Homo sapiens*. Some progress has been made in dealing with the former of these issues by studying animal communication systems. Yet formidable difficulties remain, as Critchley points out in his interesting essay, "The Evolution of Man's Capacity for Language." The emergence of speech, it is surmised, was conditioned by a variety of social factors, such as tool-using, tool-making, and division of labour, in proto-human communities. But since the available evidence here is meagre, the reconstruction of what happened requires considerable speculative talents. With regard to the other issue, the neurophysiologist, Gerard, frankly states a difficulty which many people have felt: "What is the evolutionary value of awareness? Why is it adaptive for organisms to be aware of the world and themselves? I have never been able to answer that to my satisfaction" (vol. III, 187). Huxley likewise says that "the real nub of evolution, the aspect which is most mysterious, is the fact of subjective experience" (vol. III, 48). The zoologist, Rensch, even goes so far as to deny *any* causal connections between somatic phylogeny and mental phenomena. He appears to espouse a view known to philosophers as psycho-physical parallelism. It is surprising to see this metaphysical chestnut being pulled from the fire of a sophisticated scientific discussion.

Despite the above problems, no one seriously doubts that language and conscious awareness have influenced cultural evolution. So have man's cognitive powers, the human imagination, and the capacity for purposive activity. A doubt may therefore arise about the propriety of making cultural evolution the third "sector" of a single process of cosmic evolution. Are there not profound differences here? Nearly everyone agrees that biological evolution was directed by natural selection acting on genetically controlled variations. This was the foundation well and truly laid by Darwin. But can any factors even broadly analogous to selection and genemutations be identified in the psycho-social —or for that matter in the inorganic—domains? Or are cultural and biochemical evolution so radically different from each other, and from biological evolution, as to invalidate any attempt to make them three temporally successive links in the great chain of being? These questions merit closer scrutiny than they get in the present volumes. To canvass them properly some philosophical inquiries would have to be undertaken.

This brings me to one sin of omission on the part of the organizers of the centennial. The assembled experts often found themselves confronted by philosophical questions which arose out of their scientific discussions. It was altogether admirable that when this

happened the questions were taken seriously. The experts did not hesitate to plunge in and express their views on methodological, ethical, and metaphysical issues. The trouble was that since few of them appeared to have had any training in philosophy, the views expressed were painfully crude and inept. This unfortunate result might have been avoided if collaboration between scientists and philosophers had been made possible at one of the panels. Both parties would have benefited thereby. But apparently the members of the organizing committee did not think of this possibility; or else they decided that a group of philosophers might prove to be a wet blanket on the festivities. In the latter case what they overlooked is that a philosopher can be as exuberant as the next man when circumstances warrant.

There is one other reflection to which the present volumes give rise. The theory of evolution has profoundly important implications for man's outlook on the world. It shows him in outline where he belongs in the vast economy of nature, how he came to be what he is, and what his prospects as a species are. May the theory not also become a bridge between the "two cultures" whose separation Sir Charles Snow has so rightly deplored? Let us take a quick look at this possibility.

By acquainting himself with evolutionary thought, the humanist will not merely gain some appreciation of science. He will also enrich his outlook by learning the incredible story of the development of living forms on the earth, a development of which he is a part. Some glimpse may come to him of what Julian Huxley calls, in his impassioned convocation speech, "the evolutionary vision." Conversely, the scientist who follows the consequences of the theory of evolution has to cross over into the domain of human values. By acquainting himself with humanistic studies he will enrich his outlook through a better understanding of that complex creature, man, the value-seeking animal. The scientist will, moreover, be able to join forces with the humanist in facing the momentous challenge which is now before mankind, that of guiding future evolution. In a trenchant essay, Muller states the alternatives quite simply: "From now on, evolution is what we make it, provided that we choose the true and the good. Otherwise, we shall sink back into oblivion" (vol. II, 460). Only in terms of one culture, not two, can that choice be made.

The unifying role of evolutionary theory received little emphasis at the centennial. But one participant, A. E. Emerson, did see the point. "A hundred years after the great book by Darwin," he wrote, "we have an enhanced motivation for inquiry, a hint of profound rapport between the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, and a vision of the possibility of greater wisdom in dealing with the present and future problems of man" (vol. I, 342). Darwin's heirs have, therefore, no cause to complain about their legacy. Let us hope that they will use it to ensure the celebration of a bicentennial. (T. A. GOUDGE)

The following books are considered in this article:
Sol Tax, ed., *Evolution after Darwin*. I. *The Evolution of Life: Its Origins, History, and Future;* II. *The Evolution of Man: Mind, Culture, and Society;* III. *Issues of Evolution: The University of Chicago Centennial Discussions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press [Toronto: University of Toronto Press]. 1960. Pp. vi, 629; vi, 473; vi, 310. $10.00, $10.00, $7.50.

RENAISSANCE STUDIES*

Presentation volumes are better described than reviewed. In them notable scholars publish characteristic pieces in honour of one of their number: they are thus medleys, *saturae*, from which only the satirist has been excluded. They can be tedious; this one is not. Indeed, only Professor F. P. Wilson himself would have the scholarship and the grace to do justice to the collection of essays in his honour—on such subjects as "Marlowe's Light Reading," "Classical Myth in Shakespeare's Plays," and "The Rider on the Winged Horse," about such persons as Ralegh, Harington, and Hume, by such scholars as E. M. W. Tillyard, W. W. Greg, and D. C. Allen. Clearly there is something for everybody here, but I would single out for special praise J. B. Leishman's comparison of Shakespeare with various poets from Pindar to Daniel in their use of the theme of poetry as immortalization, and Miss Helen Gardner's brilliant study, "The Argument about 'The Ecstacy'." John Dover Wilson contributes a letter—sprightly, elegiac, touching—about Granville Barker and two of his friends, Barrie and Shaw. Altogether, Festschrifts do not come more distinguished or more varied.

It is a rare thing for a scholar to publish one of his best books in the same year that he has received a volume to mark his seventieth birthday. Professor Wilson has done it in *Seventeenth Century Prose*, a book of 110 pages, comprising five lectures, whose titles are A Survey, Robert Burton, Biography, Sir Thomas Browne, and The Sermon. In spite of its academic sounding title, it is the sort of book that (as used to be said) ought to be in every gentleman's library. Certainly the generally cultivated person, Doctor Johnson's and Mrs. Woolf's common reader, will find instruction and delight on every page—if it should ever occur to him to open the book. Perhaps this will persuade him?

Bacon was neither an 'ancient' nor a 'modern'. Unlike Descartes he did not construct a system which is independent of the past; rather he desired to establish what he called a 'sociable intercourse' between antiquity and progress or 'proficience.' More important for our purposes, his prose style—or rather prose styles, for he had several—cannot easily be squared with the tenets of his followers, whether we think of the aphoristic style of his *Essays* where the *brevitas* of Tacitus and Lipsius is carried as far as it can go in the English language, or think of the eloquence of many a passage in the *Advancement*, where he is preaching the gospel of science. We should look in vain late in the century for a passage like that in which he praises the durability of learning, look in vain for anything so eloquent or for anything that pays such due tribute to the tradition of learning. I mean the passage that ends:

> If the inuention of the Shippe was thought so noble, which carryeth riches, and commodities from place to place, and consociateth the most remote regions in participation of their fruits: how much more are letters to bee magnified, which as Shippes, passe through the vast Seas of time, and make ages so distant, to participate of the wisdome, illuminations, and inuentions the one of the other?

Or perhaps he need only read the paragraph in which Mr. Wilson reveals how bright were the eyes of John Aubrey the biographer and antiquary simply by cataloguing

*See page 254 for a bibliography of books discussed in this article.

Aubrey's descriptions of the eyes of others—of Milton and Jonson, of Hobbes and Bacon, the last of whom had "a delicate lively hazel eye said by William Harvey to be like the eye of a viper."

Mr. Wilson even allows himself an imperfect sympathy: Jeremy Taylor is altogether too plummy for him.

After such learning, such grace, such brevity, one might expect a brusque bump in turning to the three books by younger American scholars. But all three, I am happy to report, can write. True, one of them on occasion can limp through a sentence like this: "They cling to a traditional moral view of politics even though they sense that medieval ideals are no longer meaningful to their society"; and no one in the whole vast establishment at Yale could save another from referring to "Big-Enders" and "Little-Enders" in *Gulliver's Travels*. Such defects are unimportant except as symptoms of fatigue or haste, the occupational diseases of the young "productive scholar." The bibliography of F. P. Wilson in his presentation volume lists a large number of learned reviews, articles, and editions, but no critical book earlier than 1945 (the Alexander Lectures, *Elizabethan and Jacobean*). What shallows and miseries an American scholar would find himself in if he were to wait so long in the last stamping ground of free competition, that most worldly of worlds, the academic; and so we get useful books, brilliant books, but seldom books civilized from beginning to end. But this is ungrateful, and I have three useful, even brilliant studies to examine.

Mr. Ornstein is concerned with what he calls the "moral vision" of Jacobean tragedy. In a careful survey of the field as a whole, of the major playwrights and all their major plays, he takes a judicious middle position between those who would make the dramatists teachers of esoteric wisdom, oracles to be interpreted by modern academic sages, and those who would subsume them to the traditional wisdom, that is to say the platitudes, of their age. "We must suppose that in the Renaissance as today creative writers were more candid and critical in their confrontation of living issues than were manufacturers of popular treatises of inspiration and self-help." And if he remembers, when it is so easy to forget, that the dramatists were men of superior insight, so also he remembers that the audiences were made up of various persons with various expectations. The general context of his discussion is so firmly in hand that he can go on to treat the individual tragedies with notable balance and solidity. Actually he lays some emphasis on an epistemological crisis early in the seventeenth century and supports his thesis by playing off humanism against scholasticism, the Renaissance against the Middle Ages, in a manner too schematic to convince me fully, though I find its application in the case of Webster most illuminating: "He presents in art the skeptical, pragmatic nominalism of the late Renaissance, the weariness with meaningless abstractions and endless debates over words. In his tragedies the Elizabethan faith in didacticism—in the moral power of words—is blown away by the first gust of violence. Humanistic learning is represented by a fool, a malcontent, and a madman." The chapter on Webster, with its discussion of the theme of "security" as the preoccupation of his characters, evil and good, I found the most

helpful, unless perhaps the discussion of Beaumont and Fletcher, with their "agonizing reappraisals of honour and loyalty" and the curious effect that they contrive of "moral optical illusion." The villainy of Julius Caesar in Jonson's *Catiline*, by the way, is not "inexplicable" but derives from Lucan.

"The scene of satire is always disorderly and crowded, packed to the very point of bursting. The deformed faces of depravity, stupidity, greed, venality, ignorance, and maliciousness group closely together for a moment, stare boldly out at us, break up, and another tight knot of figures collects, stroking full stomachs, looking vacantly into space, nervously smiling at the great, proudly displaying jewels and figures, clinking money-bags, slyly fingering new-bought fashions." The scene is equally choked with the "sheer dirty weight" of *things*. Navigating among these persons and these things, and contriving always to play it well upstage, is the satirizing figure, the person who is forever being confused with the writer. Mr. Kernan in *The Cankered Muse* uses both the etymologies of the word "satire"—the sound one from *satura*, meaning stuffed with various things, and the unsound one current in the Renaissance, from *satyr*, the clever, sardonic, earthy, disagreable persona of the satirist. The scope of the book is satire in general, and there are good insights to be gained into Pope, Swift, and Byron, Philip Wylie, and Nathaniel West; it is, however, limited in its subtitle to satire of the English Renaissance, and here, rightly, Ben Jonson stands out. There are some riotously thingy paragraphs on the scenes, persons, and matter of Jonson's comedies: everything, he suggests, is in a vast confused process of transmutation, and the gulls, the targets of satire, are literalists who wish to believe that their leaden lives can be turned into gold.

A similar image of transmutation is applied by Mr. Barish in his book on *Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy*, not to Jonson but to his predecessor. "In Lyly's world, villains can blaspheme without grossness; witches can cast their enchantments without ugliness; pages can bandy off-color jests without seeming indecent, and can complain of their toothaches and their empty stomachs without persuading us that they have ever suffered from either. The perpetual embarkation for Cythera that takes place in Lyly's comedies assumes a certain Watteauesque poignancy, perhaps, from the hard facts of court life and their author's own embittered career, but nothing ever mars the translucent surface. . . ." The metal from which these people are made is never less than semi-precious to begin with, since Lyly would disdain to work with base.

Though a close and accurate student of Renaissance rhetoric, Mr. Barish is not a prisoner of his categories; and the Ciceronian style, of which Lyly's Euphuism is a branch, and with which it is almost irresistible to have easy sport, he recognizes as capable of great dramatic strength and demonstrates his conviction by analysing Prince Hal's first speech to Falstaff. It is only after showing how well this opposite thing can be done that he sets in motion his full scale examination of Ben Jonson's highly individual prose style. "The speeches of such characters as Wasp, Tucca, and Carlo Buffone," he observes, "do not represent a mere tic of punctuation on the one hand or a mere slavish transcription of heard language on the other, but a distinct style; their barking phrases translate

into stage idiom the staccato effects of *stile coupé*. It is true enough that people often speak so, and it is also true that one may find patches of similar language in the popular comedy of the 1590's. But what in earlier writers is a mere incidental twitch Jonson transmutes into a structural principle. He takes the sprawling, ramshackle popular language and disengages from it the strain congenial to his own rhetorical bent, thus effecting a kind of merger between colloquial speech and his own Stoic models. The result is a stage prose that combines the vitality of live language with the authority and expressive potency of a formed rhetoric."

It will be noticed that the author, without ever resorting to parody, supports his argument by unobtrusively employing a style of his own appropriate to the subject under discussion—somewhat Ciceronian in the passage on Lyly, somewhat Senecan when Jonson is in question. Let me conclude by quoting one other passage that impresses me not only as good literary history and criticism but as good writing—sensitive, weighty, and civilized:

> If Jonson preserves balance, he does so only to upset balance. If he deploys symmetrical patterns, he does so only to violate their symmetry. Everywhere he is restlessly interfering with the expected structure of a phrase or clause. The asymmetrical tactics that pervade his writing form a rhetoric distinct from, and as distinct as, any of the more orthodox rhetorics, an antirhetorical rhetoric that seeks to disguise itself almost as a nonrhetoric. The necessarily stricter attentiveness of the reader to such a style, since he cannot let his mind coast in the suspensions of a periodic sentence or in the exact correspondences of the aculeate style, perhaps suggests why the laborious Jonson adopts a manner apparently most congenial to the effects of improvisation. In the hands of writers like Burton, baroque prose ambles or scampers with skittish whimsicality. Jonson, by his reluctance to fulfill expectation, his defiance of stock responses to syntax, creates an impression of granitic strength: the participation of the reader or listener becomes an exercise in rock-climbing over the jagged, twisted, craggy terrain of the syntax.

(WILLIAM BLISSETT)

The following books are considered in this article:

Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Co.]. 1960. Pp. xii, 335. $5.75.

Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies. Presented to Frank Percy Wilson in Honour of His Seventieth Birthday. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press [Toronto: Oxford University Press]. 1959. Pp. viii, 355. $6.50.

Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1959. Pp. xii, 261. $5.00.

Robert Ornstein, *The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1960. Pp. x, 299. $6.00.

F. P. Wilson, *Seventeenth Century Prose: Five Lectures*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1960. Pp. x, 129. $3.00.

The Far East: China and Japan

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Foreword

[The idea of this Supplement originated with Professor Douglas Grant, and before he resigned as Editor in June 1960 he had virtually completed the arrangements for the assignment and assembling of the articles. The expert advice and assistance of Professor W. A. C. H. Dobson of the Department of East Asiatic Studies in the University has been indispensable at all stages of the project, and I take this opportunity of thanking him on behalf of Professor Grant and myself. Professor Dobson has contributed the following foreword. M.M.]

These seven articles have all been written by orientalists who have come to maturity since World War II. Each scholar has broken new ground in his field, and each to some extent represents a departure from the tradition in which he grew up. There was a time when western scholars of Chinese designated themselves Sinologists without further qualification. They were pre-eminently philologists, and thereafter ranged freely across the wide landscape of Chinese culture, taking the whole of that knowledge as their province. They were Olympians. Their knowledge was often encyclopedic. To them we owe the great works of exploration and initiation. In the modern temper, however, Sinologists are not so far-ranging. The tendency has been less to explore freely than to occupy and cultivate intensively. Historians no longer translate poetry. Translators have become literary critics. The one-volume history (from the Oracle Bones to Mao Tse-tung) has given place to the study in depth. This development in western studies has a parallel in China itself. The great tradition of the scholar-administrator for whom "classical studies" was a discrete body of knowledge has been supplanted by the professional scholar in the various disciplines after the western academic manner. But orientalists old and new still have this in common: their studies are based on a thorough mastery of the language. This, today as in the past, distinguishes the professional from the amateur, and the scholar from the dilettante.

JOSEPH R. LEVENSON

The Intellectual Revolution in China

If we begin this story with the Opium War (1839–1842) and the first set of "Unequal Treaties" (1842–1845), we are assuming that the Western world (in the first instance, England) was the catalyst of revolution. But the Chinese communists, in whose triumph the revolution culminated, have quite another view of it. They are committed to periodization on universal Marxist lines, which would have Chinese capitalism and socialism, in necessary sequence, issuing from a feudal matrix; these stages could not depend on the interference of an outside civilization. Rather, the West connived with Confucian "feudalists" to press down on a budding democracy that was poised against them both. Chinese history on its own developed in a way not just its own: that is the primary communist statement, with equal stress on both of its halves, which, taken together, bespeak the equivalence of China and Europe. And the communists claim title to the equivalence because they are the ones, "anti-feudal" and "anti-imperialist" at the same time, who place themselves at the point of balance between a rejected Confucian China and a resisted modern West.

But what put the search for equivalence into Chinese history, not in its communist phase alone but in the century preceding it? Cultural self-questioning, progressively deepening, left thinkers unsure of their Chinese identity, as Confucian authority yielded to Western authority and Chinese history seemed to be draining off into Western channels. A series of innovators tried to secure the continuity of Chinese history, even as they responded to circumstances impairing it with new ideas belying it. Actually, so many Chinese may have felt so strongly about the autonomous generation of their modern values because autonomy was in doubt. More than likely, Chinese communism has come to the fore just because of the foreign invasions—which broke the older civilization and set off the drive for compensation—and not in spite of them, in train

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of inevitable historical progress. Explicitly, a communist view of the past century may tell us more about the eye of the beholder than about the nature of the past beheld. But implicitly, the communist explanation is a vital clue to the past, such a past that it culminated in the wide acceptance of just this eccentric view.

When the Manchu official Ch'i-ying negotiated the end of the Opium War in 1842, he flattered the British to their faces while describing them contemptuously in memorials to the throne. As he explained it to his emperor, the British, now properly "pacified," were too barbarous to realize that they were barbarians; conventional assumptions of Chinese superiority, therefore, would only irritate them, and these had better be left unstated in the official documents. Here Ch'i-ying, with an extreme assertion, in private, of Chinese superiority, was screening his inability to assert it in public. But when Chinese had to condescend in silence, it meant that they were beginning to see, dimly, a new kind of foreigner confronting them (Ch'i-ying himself, an assimilable Manchu, was the old kind). They were on their way to recognizing a new kind of China as well—no longer a world, but a nation in the world.

The road to nationhood was paved with new inventions. Their technology made these foreigners now not only victorious over the Chinese in war but equipped to exploit victory from a distance. Unlike the Manchus, modern Europeans had no need to assimilate to China. And the Chinese, unable to take them in, were just as unable to throw them out as long as the technological gap endured. Thus, from the 1840's on, a line of "self-strengtheners" brought Western technology more and more into their circle of acceptance, and they were drawn inexorably through merely military science to the industrial and political. The perimeter of the purely indigenous values shrank, even for bureaucratic Confucianists who longed to keep their social prominence and cultural distinction. While they defended the ever more narrowly defined "Chinese essence," the same West which gave them the insidious tools of defense—a merely useful technology, as it was supposed to be—was transforming an old social type, the agrarian rebel, into a proto-revolutionary, and creating a new social type, the legally protected capitalist, in the treaty ports. New roads to social prominence, new content to cultural distinction began to threaten the old *élite*, even as the latter, in its own right, was shifting the ground of Confucianism, converting it

from substance of education for life and action, to symbol of China's individuality.

The agrarian rebels were the Taipings (1850–1864). They flouted Confucianism with a garbled Christianity, part of the Western intellectual penetration. And they were pushed over the edge of rebellion by the Western economic penetration, which aggravated endemic social bitterness to a new intensity. Intellectual apostasy underscored this bitterness. Literati-officials and landlords, almost unanimously loyal to the Ch'ing, the Manchu dynasty, damned the rebels as seceders from cultural China. For what the Taipings proclaimed was a national China, in which an ethnically foreign dynasty, however Confucian in its sympathies and culturally legitimate, was nationally illegitimate.

The dynasty survived for a while, the Taipings went down. But the intellectual revolution of the twentieth century was anticipated in the Taipings' fusion of cultural iconoclasm and political nationalism. And their fusion of cultural iconoclasm and rudimentary class-analysis (the Taipings' animus toward landlords being inseparable from their anti-Confucianism) foreshadowed the fate of that revolution: pre-emption by the communists.

Along with their religious novelties, the Taipings found other things to admire in Western culture. Hung Jen-kan, for example, an influential cousin of the "Heavenly King" of the Taipings, recommended sweeping changes in Chinese customs and institutions. Calligraphy and painting were not important, he said; railroads, steamships, barometers, and thermometers were the kinds of things to admire. Superficially, in making positive recommendations like these, the rebels seemed akin to the literati-official "self-strengtheners," who also could be enthusiastic about ships and trains. But there was a real difference between them, not just in the degree of zeal for modernization but in the nature of the objective. The Taipings sought alternatives to the official values of Chinese culture, while the officials—at least those who were relatively open-minded, not obscurantist—looked rather for supplements, material shields to the spiritual heart of a culture.

What the Taipings showed was the mark of alienation. A Chinese could not disown so many old sancta of Chinese culture, simply and ruthlessly, unless he felt that what he was shedding was not of himself. He could feel himself Chinese, but then the rejected culture would be relegated solely to a class, for which Confucianism would stand as

ideology, no longer as the central idea of civilization in the large. On the other hand, the anti-Taiping literati who owned that culture (in the sense that Confucian high culture had long been connected with high standing in the Confucian state, and in the sense that literati provided the historians of the culture and most of the record which the histories enshrined) were concerned to defend it, not discard it. They had to look on the culture not as the emblem of a class but of a total, distinctive people.

And so the fatal stain of relativism began to spread over Confucian culture which had hitherto been prized as civilization in the abstract, not as *a* civilization in a world with others. Even now, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Confucianists facing Taipings, or only just rid of them, did not lower the flag; ostensibly, their Confucian avowals were still absolute and universal. But when Confucianists were shocked into self-consciousness by those *indigenous* barbarians, the Taipings, whose disavowals of Confucianism removed them morally from the Chinese world, the foreign barbarians assumed another aspect. They were not just, theoretically, aspirants to Confucian culture, potentially Chinese but handicapped by their physical remove from the centre of the world. They were genuine rivals, able, obviously, to pose cultural alternatives even to Chinese. And that very shock which made the literati, facing inward, fix Confucian culture as the possession of *all* Chinese made them, facing outward, define it as the possession of all *Chinese*. When they insisted on cultural solidarity in order to paste over the cracks in social solidarity at home, they endowed it with implications just as defensive abroad. Confucian China faced the world, instead of containing it.

The question was, rather, whether the Western world would contain China. Not only rebels, as we have seen, but would-be defenders of Confucianism were ready to see Western culture in some of its aspects make a mark in China. Missionaries introduced a wider and wider range of secular Western learning, and to some extent Chinese officials collaborated with them or took fire from their example. Li Hung-chang, for instance, memorialized in 1863 for a school of languages and science. He observed ruefully that for twenty years a fair number of foreigners had been studying the Chinese language and could read Chinese Classics, histories, and state papers, while there had been practically no corresponding activity on the Chinese side. There was something ominous about this memorial: a situation which once would have been deemed

a normal one and grounds for complacency (foreigners aspiring to the higher things, Chinese serene in their self-sufficiency) now was cause for alarm. Should the culture be left unmodified, the nation would be endangered. For when Chinese learning was becoming not necessarily an end but a tactical weapon for Westerners, Chinese indifference to Western learning was a dreamlike vestigial fancy.

Syncretism was called for in the waking world. Somehow, if one had any feeling at all for the preservation of Confucian values, the latter had to be harmonized with the new knowledge. Li Hung-chang and the other self-strengtheners deprecated their Western borrowings as means, not ends, but the "means" too obviously were sweeping all but the rhetoric before them. Knowledge of the means was becoming so essential that it was reducing the Chinese learning to historical significance, though this learning was the ostensible essence that the means were supposed to protect. It remained for a group near the end of the century, the "Reformers," to try to naturalize the foreign learning by bringing it within Confucianism, not just suffering it to serve. In particular, the disastrous Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895 convinced them that mere sufferance of the Western learning was not enough. A Confucianism that walled off the great subjects of modern thought stripped itself of relevance and China of her defenses. The Reformers persuaded themselves that this was unnecessary and illegitimate, for what they valued they had truly inherited; Confucius, correctly understood, the orthodox reading of the Classics being properly amended, gave a Chinese warrant to science, democracy, and the theory of historical progress.

The Reformers had a brief moment of political influence (the "Hundred Days," summer, 1898), but by and large Confucianists in office made their social plans abortive, while Confucianists in commitment rejected their emendations to the textual tradition. In fact, the modernist Confucianism of the Reformers could only be a way-station to either a modernization under non-Confucian auspices on the one hand, or to a Confucianism ranged against the Western, modern influence on the other. For the academic orthodoxy which the Reformers assailed had been responsible for maintaining Confucius' reputation as a sage. The Confucius of the traditional Confucianists was the Confucius who mattered historically, and the Reformers' zeal to rehabilitate him as a popular champion (among other things), to absolve him of responsibility for the later authoritarianism, was excessive; if Confucius had not been

taken over by literati-officials of the imperial state, he would never have been so prominent in history as to invite such modern attention. The only Confucius whose imprimatur could matter was the Confucius of a society which the Confucian Reformers were ready to undercut.

Actually, to undercut it, their recommendations were not required. Rather, a Western challenge, social and intellectual, was already irresistible, and their Confucian-Western syncretism was not an incitement but a response. Without any Confucian sanction, Western culture would still be making inroads; it was Confucius' influence in China that was at stake, not Western influence, and it was the Confucian side of the Confucian Westernizers, not the Western side, that needed the syncretism. Chinese thinkers in general needed it, or some more viable intellectual formula, to harmonize their Chinese attachments with their awareness of the West.

The final proof that the search for harmony could not be avoided came with the Boxer Movement of 1900. In this xenophobic rising, Chinese peasants and Ch'ing protegees among the officials tried pathetically to drown out Western influence as a discordant note, and bring China back to her lost aloneness. Boxerism was a terrible simplification of China's Western problem; this desperate, last illusion of triumph of the will over practical power had to be tried to be dispelled. The Boxer Movement was the last paroxysm of solid anti-foreignism in Chinese history.

It was solid in a double sense. First, it was absolutely opposed not only to Western political purposes but to all Western culture. And second, there was a great degree of Chinese class solidarity in this particular response to the West. But the Western intrusion had made it inevitable that Chinese culture should be dynamically changed and Chinese class relations embittered. After the Boxer hopelessness, anti-foreignism yielded to nationalism, with all its potential affinity for cultural innovation. And instead of Chinese social solidarity against the outside world we find decades of revolution, with one or another Chinese group being scorned as "running dogs" of one foreign bloc or another.

After 1900, in its last decade, the dynasty turned from sponsoring the utterly discredited Boxer type of obscurantism to encouraging, modestly, new social forces that conceivably might strengthen the state. Patents, company law, industrial schools, and tax reductions were instituted in an effort to nurture industry for the state's defense. It was an effort, in the

self-strengthening spirit, to protect the old order. Yet, the means were hard to reconcile with a basic premise of the old order: traditionally, business was not something to bolster the state apparatus, but something on which the state's officials battened. The mandarinate's timid encouragement of industry was an attempt to prolong its life. But as long as its life was prolonged, there was a drag on industry; and to the extent that industry resisted the drag, the mandarin order was threatened.

The same ambiguity plagued the régime in another of its recourses, the sponsorship of foreign study, especially in Japan. In lieu of the ineffective old thought of the Boxers, modern thought which the Boxers hated had to be mastered, but in the end this was hardly an intellectual expedient that could fortify the Ch'ing. For the dynasty was as vulnerable now as in Taiping days to Chinese nationalism—more vulnerable, really, since even the literati's education in Confucian culture (which took the curse off Manchu foreignness) was falling into abeyance. And nationalism ran rampant in Chinese student circles in Japan; so much was to be learned in Japan which could not be assimilated into traditional Chinese culture that the anti-traditional potentialities of nationalism commended it to the students. If it was nationally useful, one could legitimately choose the culturally unorthodox. Both reason and emotion favoured the choice. Rationally, as a nationalist one could justify innovation if it strengthened the nation. And emotionally, if the nation, not the tradition, was supposed to matter, one could be soothed while discerning tradition's decay. Rather than contemplate China as a defeated traditional culture, there were those who preferred to envision it as a culturally changed victorious nation.

Therefore, the Manchus, trying to conjure up strength to save themselves from a traditional dynastic overthrow, invited a modern one. Chinese nationalism, at least in part, was a concomitant of Manchu reform policy, and nationalism hit the Manchus in two ways. First, it arraigned them as foreign usurpers and, worse still, usurpers in power during years and years of Chinese defeats. And second, the iconoclastic implications of nationalism, like the patriotic ones, made bad news for the Ch'ing. Many nationalists were just as ready to overthrow the old institution of the throne as, say, the old institution of foot-binding.

In 1911 and 1912 the overthrow was achieved and the Chinese republican era began. Almost from the start it soured the hopes of its partisans.

Nothing seemed changed socially—a grave disappointment to the evolutionary expectations of Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Kuomintang, the party of republican nationalists. Sun had looked on a republic as the latest thing in politics, inherently better than monarchy (constitutional or not). But here was the Chinese Republic floundering into fragments, its people still subject to the old exploitations, while its "strong man," Yüan Shih-k'ai, was scheming to wreck it entirely.

And yet, something had changed. The political and social revolutions seemed hollow, but a cultural revolution had been seriously furthered; when the Ch'ing fell the monarchical mystique seemed drained, and all manner of old traditions were emptied with it. Genuinely new thought jarred with its spuriously new political environment. The abortive revolution of 1911, abortive but not meaningless, was really part of a process of revolution. It had not yet worked itself out. When easy expectations of a predetermined advancement were dispelled, the field was cleared for a revolution with iron content, not airy verbiage.

And it was a stage in revolution, not just a pseudo-revolutionary fiasco, in another way. The Manchu question was buried. Society did not seem to improve (the revolution *might* seem mere fiasco), but the Manchus were no longer available as a lightning rod for nationalistic passions. The latter could no longer be diverted from their always potential target, *Chinese* responsibility for China's low estate. After 1912, unmistakably, Chinese society and culture themselves, not whatever the Manchus were supposed to have done to them, came under coldest scrutiny. To the intellectual leaders of the "Chinese Renaissance" (around *New Youth*, founded 1915, certain other periodicals, and the "May Fourth Movement" of 1919),[1] the Manchus were dead, and the Chinese paladins of traditional culture were nakedly exposed. That most untraditional of Chinese conflicts, the conflict of generations, was openly encouraged.

A new literature began to emerge as one expression of this conflict, an expression in both form and content. In content, the literature was permeated by concern with family tensions, both political and personal—crabbed age and youth ranged against each other on questions of public social action and private freedom for the emotional life. In form, the literature exemplified the conflict in its very language, a vernacular Chinese instead of the classical language which, by the old standards, was the only medium for respectable expression. The rise of vernacular

seemed to its advocates one of their points of contact with the European Renaissance, which the "May Fourth" generation chose to exalt as a harbinger of the day of the young, not a revival of antiquity.

Actually, the very drive to construct this "Renaissance" analogy compromised its validity. The analogy was supposed to extend to nationhood. But there was a vast distinction between several nations discovering their identities within Europe (via vernacular literatures, and so on) and a single nation *redefining* its identity as China. Substitution of national for cultural loyalty was implicit in the young Chinese nationalism (not in the Western specimens), and the content of the nationalists' "New Culture Movement" was so largely drawn from the West that an impulse to lay the spectre of debt was almost irresistible. Parallel development to scientific and democratic cultures—down a Classic-Mediaeval-Renaissance-Modern paradigm, as one possibility—was a comforting assumption. But the comfort had to be sought because the parallel could not really be found.

This flaw in the cultural heart of Chinese nationalism broke it into extremes. A central position of non-communist anti-traditionalism was a weak position, for the West seemed too intrusive. Intellectually, a move to the left, to communism, gave a sanction to modernization that seemed emotionally less expensive, on three counts. First, if science was one of the new values, then it seemed appropriate to locate it in the Marxist paradigm of historical progress, since Marxism stressed its scientific pretensions. Then, this very historicism enabled Marxists to relativize the values they felt outworn; where an absolute curse on the tradition (like much of the "May Fourth" invective) might seem to outrage the Chinese personality, the relegation of tradition to its own era would save it for China, yet gratifyingly bury it as a live option. And finally, the Marxist critique had just as fine a cutting edge for modern Europe as for modern China. Revolution everywhere was recommended. Instead of a simple (but difficult) liberal admiration for the West and impatience with an unreconstructed China, communism could offer even-handed hostility to "imperialists" abroad and "feudalists" at home.

Of course, the communist refuge from the pain of modernization could not be open to everyone. Conservative nationalism was the other intellectual pole after "May Fourth." This was a post-Confucian China; it cost something to be a Chinese thinker in a world of Western thought.

If communism made compensation for the loss of tradition, how did an anti-communist nationalism face the loss?

It reintegrated traditionalism into iconoclasm. This sounds paradoxical, since Chinese nationalism, as we have suggested, depended on the waning of tradition. Yet, this paradox is a central fact in modern Chinese history and a key to its complexity.

One must insist that in conservative nationalism, as in any other, the untraditional was always there, at least latently. In the political struggles of the 1920's, just after "May Fourth," genuine traditionalists, those with a primary commitment to tradition, were anti-nationalist. Either they favoured war-lord interests against Sun Yat-sen, his Kuomintang nationalists, and their provisional allies, the communists (1924–1927); or they opposed the war lords in a totally reactionary way, identifying the scourge of warlordism with the scourge of the Republic and looking back nostalgically to the old imperial days. The lines were drawn in the early 1920's: political nationalism and cultural iconoclasm were aligned together against political anti-nationalism (that is, war lords, some of them with foreign backing) and cultural conservatism. The alliance of Kuomintang and communists, however ephemeral politically, was culturally valid. There was a natural bond between them, as *new men*, all of them new.

Then what distinguished Kuomintang from communists? If at heart they agreed on cultural iconoclasm, their disagreement had to be social. Kuomintang adherents were eager to prevent the expropriation they foresaw if the communists prospered. Therefore, they opposed communist class-analysis of society, since that augured so ill for them. And this social cleavage had cultural implications, for one of the fruits of communist class-analysis was a new version of the old Taiping approach, the attribution of certain traditional values to a ruling class alone. This intellectual attitude, together with others, mentioned above (like satisfaction in seeing the West as well as China consigned to revolution), was what made it emotionally possible for Chinese communists to desert tradition.

But this revolutionary medicine was unavailable to nationalists who would be ruined by revolution. Hence, for both polemical (as an argument against social opponents) and psychological purposes (as emotional sustenance for themselves), nationalists reintegrated traditionalism into their nationalism. Socially, tradition was useful to nationalists as anti-

communists; denying that class-war should exist, they held that all Chinese belonged together as Chinese, and distinctly Chinese values, transcending social divisions, would be a cultural cement. And psychologically, tradition was necessary to nationalists as non-communists, barred by their social requirements from the communist means of renouncing a moribund system. They were nationalist enough to feel estrangement from their traditional culture, but the communist brand of compensation was socially impossible. Therefore, their only way to treat the malaise that alienation bred was to deny the alienation.

Already, ever since the first iconoclastic stirrings of the nationalism leading to 1911 and 1919, the defense of tradition had tended to be romantically conservative, not rationalistically conservative in the primary Confucian sense. That is, the authentic Confucian case for traditionalism had been turned into a traditionalist case for Confucianism—a Confucianism rendered as modern, as "transvalued," as iconoclasm itself. As a component of conservative nationalism, militating against radical social change, neo-traditionalism (Confucian "national essence" and all) testified as eloquently as anything else to the thoroughly post-Confucian nature of republican Chinese history.

The tribute paid by conservative nationalists to old official values—even while these conservatives were as finally divorced from real tradition as the communists were—exposed them to more of the communist class critique; it was this critique in the first place which had elicited the traditionalistic (but not traditional) response. When the Kuomintang laboured traditional values instead of living in a pure and simple commitment to them, this encouraged desertions on the class-analysis grounds which the communists owned and which the anti-communists were precluded from accepting. Accordingly, the Kuomintang's pseudo-Confucian "New Life Movement" in the 1930's was doomed to inanition. As traditionalism became more transparently a social device, it lost its claim to philosophical respect.

When the Kuomintang lost its grip after World War II, the Communist Party, not the "Democratic League" or any other "Third Force" grouping, took full power. There were many good political reasons why it ended like this; one could explain in political terms the impotence of the liberals in recent Chinese history. Intellectual history is no substitute for political explanation here, but it is a corroboration, or as much a part of

a rich complex as the Taiping case affords. If intellectual revolution in modern China has taken a communist turn, not a liberal anti-traditionalist one, it is not just that communists won politically and laid down an intellectual line. There were circumstances in Chinese culture that led to the line—intellectual circumstances leading as logically to a communist polity as political circumstances led to a communist credo.

A Christian credo, also, had been offered to China in the modern period. Christian missions had deeply affected the breakdown of the old order. But the fate of Christianity vis-à-vis Marxism in China paralleled the fate of liberal Westernizers in their confrontation with communists. With a glance at the problem of Chinese Christianity, let us recapitulate the grammar of Marxist assent.

There were particular difficulties in nineteenth-century proselytizing. Chinese were baffled at the deluge of scriptures having so few points of contact with their own culture, and the church was embroiled in Chinese resentment of the "unequal treaties" which had been wrested by force and were mainstays of the missions. However, with the discrediting of the Boxer xenophobia (particularly fierce in its anti-Christianity), there came a time of promise to the missions. Moods changed in the 1920's; nationalist student youth made both an intellectual and political assault on the missions, despite a considerable missionary effort to shake free of embarrassing associations. With the rise of the communist threat, missionaries and nationalists (that is, the Kuomintang, anti-communist nationalists) came closer together. With the communist triumph, the missions shared in the nationalist debacle.

So much for a bare historical sketch. But the historical question posed by it is nothing less than how it became possible for Chinese minds to drift from historical Chinese values. Right from the start, missionaries had feared that the materially useful elements of Western culture which they brought to China might be adopted without (as they considered it) the spiritual essence. But why should they face this prospect? We recall that there were Chinese, too, concerned with the matter-spirit dichotomy, but with a reversed emphasis: for conservative reformers, the problem seemed one of hedging a *Chinese* spiritual essence with merely useful Western material. Such a concern for Chinese equivalence with the materially irresistible West, we have suggested, has been discernible in all shades of modern Chinese thought, and Christianity in China, probably inevitably, was its victim. Christianity's role was vicarious. Chinese

came to require it, not as something to be believed in but as something to be rejected.

That is, as an ultimate faith, empirically undemonstrable, Christianity was *rejectable*, in a way that modern science (which Christianity helped to introduce) was not; so Christianity (the West as "Christian civilization") became ballast to unload, to right the balance when industrialism (the West as "industrial civilization") had to be taken on. The obvious indictments of missionaries—on counts like cultural obtuseness, interference in litigation, or just simple foreignness—make failures plausible for this time or that, but in themselves, uninterpreted in the wider cultural context, they do not account for the dynamic in Chinese anti-Christianity. This dynamic was the change from the charge of "anti-traditional" to the charge of "anti-modern."

If we dwell on the fact that the Boxers hated a foreign technology as well as a foreign religion, we see more than the mere occasions of the Christian dilemma. For it is the Boxers' anti-modern, not their anti-Christian, paroxysm that strikes us as fantastic, and this because we sense that Western technology must get through in the end. The Boxer rage against Christianity seems fanatic but not fantastic; there are no historical factors which make its rejection unthinkable. Boxer (and Confucian-intellectual) anti-modernism faded like any illusion but the malaise which called it forth was real, and the Boxers' one *possible* cultural balm, defeat of Christianity, almost had to come when anti-modernism had to go. The continuity of Chinese history, vindication of Chinese self-respect, seemed to be at stake. Christians, who had tried for a long time, some of them, to confound Confucianists with science and thus to level the Chinese wall against themselves as Western, succeeded so well that they failed, and found themselves just "mediaevals" disqualified by "moderns."

Seen thus, both the Chinese and Christian predicaments had a poignancy about them. The missionaries were in a maze: Chinese need of reassurance was such that in whatever direction the Christians headed—towards accommodation to historical Chinese culture or towards renovation—they were equally lost. One can find tactical flaws in the Christian approaches, but these were not the determinants of failure. If one assumes so, he implies that Christianity, not communism, might have won the chance to make the new Chinese culture.

So it may, later, when the conditions of Chinese intellectual choice are far from what they have been in the last hundred years; the future is not

prejudged. Yet, for our own day, the forces which favoured a Marxist breakthrough in modern China were the very ones which made for the Christian impasse. One ought not to see the defeat of Christianity in China as simply a corollary of the communist victory (communism being anti-Christian), and then look for the causes of communist triumph irrespective of Christianity's place in Chinese history. Christianity did not wait in the wings to see who prevailed, communists or Kuomintang, and only lose when its own sworn enemy won. Rather, Christianity, in retrospect, seems made for the scaffold in modern China, and for the same reasons that Marxism has taken the throne.

What about communism in prospect? Such episodes as the "Hundred Flowers" outburst of criticism of the communist régime (1957) may make it appear that the intelligentsia, corralled by main force, is in the communist state but not of it. Perhaps, after all, this is a Chinese intelligentsia in a living tradition, with the latest version of an old Confucian detachment from autocracy. May the disenchantment of the students, largely educated under communism, point towards the end of the communist intellectual appeal and the rehabilitation of the tradition it supplanted?

The communist appeal may certainly dwindle, but no "Chinese essence" is likely to be refurbished. If intellectuals now are tools, merely used (hence subject to harassment) by those who run the state, the state in which intellectuals were ends, the Confucian state, had been deserted by just these modern intellectuals or their recent forbears. They do not, in short, represent an unmoving, perennial element in Chinese society, whose fate in contemporary China can be explained by reference to state directives, an outside force. If China has changed to the extent that such a state exists, the intelligentsia has changed with it. Contemporary intellectuals are not outside the system, resisting or bending to force; their character helps to account for the system's existence. If they come to threaten its existence, they will do so not because the pre-communist order is so alive that its faithful ones triumph, but so dead that defectors from it may split among themselves.

Still, they really are, really were defectors. It is sometimes suggested that the communist régime is a new dynasty, with grand old Confucian institutions: bureaucracy, Classics, and a True Way. However titillating, this paradox ought to be set aside. Chinese communism is no Confucian masquerade. "Anti-Western" means one thing in cold-war terminology,

other things in Opium War or Boxer parlance. This is not Confucianism prospering in communist guise, because Chinese communism—offering itself as compensation to heirs with a vanishing heritage—responds (and corresponds) to Confucian impoverishment.

And if communism is a response to this historical break, it is hardly the fruit of unbroken historical growth. Indeed, there has been an intellectual revolution in modern China. But China has not just revolved back to her starting point (wherever this paper may be), nor moved onward and upward, driven from within, along lines laid down in antiquity. Western history has tangled the lines.

notes

1 The "May Fourth Movement" politically was a surge of feeling against the Japanese expropriators of Shantung province, and so on, their World War allies, and their Chinese official creatures, and culturally, against the temper and institutions of China, which had allegedly made her such easy, helpless game.

ALBERT FEUERWERKER

Rewriting Chinese History: Interpreting the Past in the People's Republic of China

The environment in which the writing and teaching of history in the People's Republic of China has taken place, notwithstanding certain common features, differs in several respects from the experience of the Soviet Union. Unlike Russia, where "it was almost a decade after the revolution before the Bolsheviks were in a position from the point of view of staff and organization to exert a decisive influence on the historical profession,"[1] in post-1949 China, history has been from the beginning as much under party control as any other feature of the intellectual scene. But this control has not taken the form of a Pokrovsky, who almost single-handedly dictated to the Soviet historical profession until his death in 1932 and posthumous disgrace. Nor have historical disputations in Communist China been marked by the personal vilifications, accusations, and counter-accusations such as were endemic in the Soviet Union after the death of Pokrovsky. Only during the anti-rightist campaign of 1957 were a number of historians severely attacked, and even this was only a minor sideshow to the main spectacle. In part the relative calm is explained by the fact that a significant number of prominent historians were already fully committed to the communist cause prior to 1949. I might mention Wu Han, a Ming specialist, who was active politically during the war and in 1948 left his post at Tsinghua University to join the communist forces in Manchuria. Others include, of course, Kuo Mo-jo, now president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences; the archaeologist Yin Ta; Fan Wen-lan, director of the third office (Modern History) of the Institute of Historical Research; Chien Po-tsan, Hou Wai-lu, Lü Chen-yü, and Pai Shou-yi. And even among those historians who were not committed politically, Marxist modes of historical thinking had made considerable inroads during the 1920's and 1930's.

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Within this relatively favourable context the communist régime has sponsored a programme of historical revisionism which seeks to remold all of the past on the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist model. In China, where communism combines not only with virulent nationalism but also with the world's longest continuous historical tradition, those who would seek to perpetuate their rule must be acutely aware that, however much one's goal may be to influence men's minds with respect to the importunate present, realization of that goal is inexorably dependent on the way in which these minds view the past. Mao Tse-tung's "Mandate of Heaven" requires no less justification than that of the Chou conquerors of the earliest historical Chinese state, the Shang, in the twelfth century B.C.

The guide lines for this task of rewriting the record of China's past were laid down by Kuo Mo-jo in July 1951 in an address to the founding meeting of the Chinese Historical Society. The "old idealistic" view of history was to be replaced by a "materialistic" view. Collective research was to replace individual studies. "Ivory tower" studies, which did not "serve the people," were condemned. "Adoration of the past and contempt for the present" were to give way to a greater appreciation of the modern period. An end to "Han chauvinism" and increased attention to the histories of the non-Chinese minority peoples was urged. And, finally, "emphasis on European and American history" was to cede place to the study of Asian history. (This last—a strange statement, indeed, for Chinese historians prior to 1949 had made few contributions to Western history—was an obvious bid for the leadership of Asia in intellectual as well as in political matters.)

As might be expected, the first decade of the People's Republic has seen a vast outpouring of historical writings. The articles, popular and scholarly, and appearing in dozens of journals and newspapers, defy any attempt to count them. As to books, some 2,032 titles, including many multi-volume works, are listed under "History" in the *National Bibliography of China* (*Ch'uan-kuo ts'ung shu-mu*) through December 1958, and undoubtedly many other historical works are included elsewhere in the rather clumsy classification scheme of the *Bibliography*. The vast majority, some 1674, of these titles were published in 1954 and later.[2]

On the surface it would appear that they hew quite closely to the line set forth by the panjandrums of the historical profession. It is only the rare item that does not somewhere between its covers make a bow to the historical theories of Marx and Engels and, increasingly, to the "theo-

retical writings" of Mao Tse-tung. Multi-volume collections of source materials, often the result of the efforts of committees of compilers, occupy a prominent place in the output of historical works. At least thirty-six such projects are presently underway in the field of Chinese modern economic history alone. Through 1958, in so far as monographic works are concerned, 187 ancient and mediaeval titles are listed in the *National Bibliography* as against 170 titles for modern and contemporary history; the present is hardly being ignored. A new genre of factory histories and histories of communes, ideally written with the co-operation of the workers and peasants concerned, has recently appeared. The statistics available are inconclusive, but presumably more attention is being paid to the history of the Chinese Muslims, the Miao, the Mongols, and other minority nationalities. And as before, there is little research on the national histories of the countries not in the "Socialist Camp." (Surprisingly, in spite of the abundance of Marxist historical writing in Japan, almost none of this finds its way into Chinese translation.)

But how in fact has the substance of Chinese history fared, arrayed in this new and multitudinous finery?

The key to understanding the Marxist-Maoist historiography of the past decade is what I shall call the problem of meaninglessness. Joseph Levenson has pointed out (in his brilliant *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*) that while modern Chinese intellectuals—this includes the communist historians—*as intellectuals* have rejected their Confucian heritage, *as Chinese* this has not been a painless amputation. The more so in that the intellectual influences, including Marxism, which replaced the values of the past, were preponderantly Western. Even for the "new men" of the "New China" the cultural tug of the past demands the apotheosis of some Chinese equivalent to fill the void left by the rejected Confucian-literati tradition. Hence the conscious effort to substitute a new past for the old. But the deliberate creation of a new, popular, Marxist tradition has apparently aggravated rather than ameliorated the problem of finding meaning in China's history. As a consequence, the mainland historians are paradoxically being forced to resurrect and incorporate, with changes of course, portions of the heritage that the iconoclastic May Fourth generation had discarded. How successful this way out will be remains an unanswered question. In what follows I shall consider four aspects of the attempt of the historians of Communist China since 1949 to rewrite their history: the interpretation of peasant rebellions; the controversy

over the origins of capitalism; the discussion of "the formation of the Han nation"; and the place of "imperialism" in current Chinese historiography.

In setting out to find a new meaning in the past, the communist historians have directed their attention first to the peasant rebellions that are an endemic feature of Chinese history. Mao Tse-tung has said it: "These class struggles of the peasants . . . alone formed the real motive force of historical development in China's feudal society. For each of the major peasant risings and wars dealt a blow to the existing feudal regime, and more or less furthered the development of the social productive forces." Therefore the past ten years have seen an enormous outflow of documentary material and special studies devoted to the *nung-min ch'i-i*, the "righteous uprisings of the peasantry." Mao's remarks have been interpreted to mean that historical movement comes only as a result of the overthrow of successive dynasties by peasant revolts. These uprisings force the new dynastic unifiers (sometimes of peasant origin themselves, as in the cases of Liu Pang [reigned 206–195 B.C.], founder of the Han, and Chu Yuan-chang [reigned 1368–1398], founder of the Ming, who are the favorite examples) to relax momentarily the restrictions on society's "social productive forces." They are compelled to offer concessions to the peasantry which allegedly increase peasant security and agricultural output. And the resulting larger social surplus is the basis on which commerce, handicraft, and urban clusters develop that will ultimately undermine the "feudal" form of society.

The Chinese communist historians acknowledge that there is a "dialectical" problem inherent in the foregoing process, that is, the beneficial results of peasant uprisings are realized *only* when these disturbances have been suppressed and order restored. This is so because the peasantry, in the orthodox Marxist-Leninist view, is incapable of organizing a new socio-political structure of its own. *Nung-min ch'i-i*, then, cannot be viewed uncritically by the mainland historians; they are not the historical equivalent of the movement led by the Chinese Communist Party which successfully overthrew the "compradore-feudal" Kuomintang and established socialist political power in China. Nor, may I add, given this "dialectical" evaluation, do they seem to be a foundation solid enough on which to erect a past that will evoke unqualified commitment. While useful perhaps in satisfying an immediate emotional hunger, peasant rebellion may be a rather unsatisfactory staple historical diet. Can a

Chinese intellectual, even a Marxist, really believe that peasant rebellion is the nourishing kernel that can be extracted from China's history and all the rest discarded as husk?

The subject of peasant revolts, however, is one on which there is probably considerable agreement among mainland historians. There is far less unanimity in the case of a second major area of concern, the question of "incipient capitalism" (*tzu-pen chu-i meng-ya*). The problem of capitalist origins follows naturally from the Chinese communist assertion that, however slowly, China's "feudal" economy was developing and changing. What would have been the outcome of that development if it had not been diverted from its "natural" course by foreign aggression?

For a time, during 1956 and 1957, it appeared that the view represented by Professor Shang Yueh of the People's University in Peking had won the day. In brief, Shang and his supporters argued that the late Ming economy—say the sixteenth century—was already proto-capitalist. The central arch of this contention was the asserted widespread existence of factory handicrafts (*kung-ch'ang shou-kung-yeh*) which are presumed to have fulfilled the Marxian criteria for capitalist production. The new "bourgeoisie" of the late Ming (whose ideological leaders it is explained were such men as Ku Yen-wu and Huang Tsung-hsi) would eventually have seized political power in combination with their peasant allies (this is the interpretation given to Li Tzu-ch'eng's rebellion which overthrew the Ming dynasty in 1644) and then proceeded to prepare the rest of the prerequisites for the development of industrial capitalism, just as their English and French counterparts are alleged to have done. But the Manchu invasion in the first instance, and the imperialists' aggression and exploitation which followed in the nineteenth century, prevented this happy fruition.

Like the debates on the nature of Chinese society of the 1920's and 1930's, it seems to me that the present concern to establish that China's premodern economy was in fact evolving in accordance with the Marxist normative stages of societal development can best be understood as part of an effort to erect a new meaningful past, as the sewing of another seam in the garment that would replace the rejected Confucian-literati habit. By claiming an identical pedigree with the West, parallel and not derivative, and of equal hoariness, the mainland historians are simultaneously discarding the Confucian past and substituting a *Chinese*

equivalent value. To assert that Chinese society was not fundamentally different, and to ascribe the humiliations endured to the conspiracy of the Manchu dynasty and its "compradore-feudal" successors with the imperialist powers is doubtless a means whereby self-respect may be preserved and the positive value of tradition maintained.

It may well be, given the underdeveloped state of East Asian studies in the West, that we have until now underestimated the degree of commercialization of the premodern Chinese economy. But the step from the posited existence of extensive commerce and advanced forms of organization in handicraft manufacture to the assertion that the Chinese economy was developing toward an "industrial revolution" is an act of faith rather than a "scientific" historical conclusion. Even more significant than the external criticism that we might apply is the fact that more recently the weight of authoritative opinion in Communist China seems to have swung away from Shang Yueh.

The reaction against Shang Yueh raises some doubt about the probability that the mainland historians will be able to reach agreement on this part of the new reading of the past that they are seeking to establish. Assuming that somewhere in the writings of Mao (or Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin) there is the word, which of the incomplete and frequently offhand directives provided by the "classics" of Marxism shall be followed? In the present case, Shang Yueh bases his exegesis on the following sentence from Mao Tse-tung: "As China's feudal society developed its commodity economy and so carried within itself the embryo of capitalism, China would of herself have developed slowly into a capitalist society even if there had been no influence of foreign imperialism." His opponents indict him for contradicting a passage from the same work by Mao that immediately precedes the one that I have just quoted: "Chinese feudal society lasted for about 3,000 years. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that great internal changes took place in China as a result of the penetration of foreign capitalism." Behind their charge is the fear that too great an emphasis on internal proto-capitalist developments prior to the full impact of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century might divert attention from the villain's role assigned to foreign capitalism in transforming China into a "semi-colonial, semi-feudal" status. This clearly would not fit in with the need, at this stage of the Chinese revolution, to project a large share of the blame for a century and more of humiliation and weakness onto the "imperialist aggressors"—a matter to which I shall return in a moment.

Moreover, playing up the degree of China's economic development along the Marxist road to capitalism may raise doubts about the historical necessity of the revolution led by the Communist Party. "If 300 years ago capitalism already held such a secure position," state the critics of Shang Yueh, "then the anti-feudal land reform led by the Communist Party could not have occurred. . . . How could there have been any necessity for the proletariat to seize the leadership of the democratic revolution?"

In sum, then, the argument that the Chinese economy was following a path of development parallel to but independent of Western Europe, because it can never be firmly based on scripture, and because it appears to conflict with certain political needs of the régime that have a higher priority, has turned out to be a less than satisfactory link for a newly forged chain of the past.

Two other historical topics that have received especial attention in the People's Republic of China are closely related to the controversy over incipient capitalism—the question of the "formation of the Han nation" and the impact of "imperialism" on China. The first of these has centred on the problem of applying Stalin's four criteria of a "nation" to the case of China, with the position taken by the historian Fan Wen-lan as the particular object of attack. Fan, applying Stalin's criteria, argued that as early as the Ch'in-Han period (221 B.C.–A.D. 220) China already had a common language, a common territory, a common economic life, and a common psychology based on a common culture. He stressed especially the degree of economic development, asserting that Chinese "feudalism" differed from European feudalism in permitting the free alienation of land, in the degree of social mobility that was possible, and because it was characterized by the fusion of landlord and merchant classes. "Feudal" industry and commerce in China, therefore, was conducive to national unity and was the basis for the formation of a unified state (*t'ung-i kuo-chia*). "The Han race," Fan wrote, "from the Ch'in-Han onwards was not a *narodnost'* [nationality] in a period of national disunity, nor was it a bourgeois nation of the capitalist period. It was a unique nation formed under unique social conditions."

Among Fan's critics, the issue of whether or not premodern China had a common economy drew the most fire. They chose to make a sharp distinction between a unified state and a nation, and to argue that the latter could not exist prior to the development of capitalism, without which there could be no national market and hence no common economy.

And, depending on where one stood in the controversy about the origins of capitalism, this could not be earlier than either the sixteenth century or the mid-nineteenth century after the Opium War. The other half of Fan's assertion of China's uniqueness, that China was never a bourgeois nation, did not fare much better. He was severely criticized for failing to give adequate attention to the effects of the incursion of foreign capitalism and, as a result, for not distinguishing clearly between "feudal society" and "semi-feudal semi-colonial society" which to the communists was the special form of bourgeois society into which China was allegedly transformed in the nineteenth century.

If there had been no Chinese bourgeois nation, Fan was asked, then how could one distinguish the ancient movements of the Han race against their feudal rulers and foreign aggressors from the "national liberation movement" of the past century? Moreover, Fan Wen-lan was in error in holding that because the proletariat led the bourgeoisie in the revolution that culminated in 1949, therefore China could not have been a bourgeois nation. In that case, how could one understand the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the last fifty years for the leadership of the nation?

The significance of these arguments for the task of reinterpreting the past is not difficult to see. On the one hand, Fan Wen-lan's statement that the Han race constituted "a unique nation formed under social conditions" represents an attempt, while still remaining within the perimeters of Marxism-Leninism, to claim for China a *sui generis* path of development. But however tempting emotionally as a way of reconstructing a meaningful *Chinese* past, the suggestion that China was unique in any important respect is anathema to orthodox Marxism. Thus China as a "unique nation" cannot explicitly serve as a source of meaning for China's history. On the other hand, Fan's critics are unanimous only in disagreeing with him. Each makes a bow to the classics of Marxism, but when it comes to specifying precisely when each of the four Stalinist criteria of a nation became operative in China, there is no agreement. Nor should one expect there to be when the writing of history sometimes consists of no more than the collection of quotations to illustrate the often inaccurate chance remarks of the doctrinal authorities. Although, as I shall point out, it is indeed to nationalism that the mainland historians have in the end to turn, their effort to renew the past has benefited little from their contemplation of the "problem of the formation of the Han nation."

One further way of rescuing the value of the past, in this case of the

most recent century, is to turn the blame for the political weakness, economic chaos, and cultural discord of that century onto an external scapegoat. The singular evil, and increasingly the focus of the study of modern history in Communist China, is "imperialism."

Any reader who has turned his attention to the deluge of historical writing now pouring out from the People's Republic of China will certainly be aware of a consistent, if unintended, imprecision in the treatment of this "evil" in modern Chinese history. It is remarkable to what degree historical narration tends to lump all foreign contact with China in the modern period under the heading "imperialist aggression" and to ignore any finer distinctions. The first and greatest sinner on this count is Mao himself, in whose doctrinal writings "foreign capitalism" and "foreign imperialism" are often loosely interchangeable. Whatever we may think of his particular formulations, it is evident that for Lenin "imperialism" had a relatively specific and restricted meaning. The contrast between Lenin's specificity and the looseness of the Chinese communist historians is so marked that we can hardly believe that the Chinese are not aware of it. The only tenable explanation, I would suggest, is that it would be misleading to interpret the protean and omnipresent touchstone "imperialism" in current mainland writing as a very serious attempt to employ even the tools of Marxism to probe the history of the past century in order to comprehend it better—to *explain* its structure and dynamics. The study and writing of modern history in the People's Republic of China at the present time is primarily an ideological exercise and emotional release, repeated over and over again, the function of which is to harness and channel the real political and economic frustrations of the past century in the interests of a new historical integration under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party.

Even while this state of affairs continues, one cannot but be aware of misgivings on the part of some of the participants. The mainland historians are very much preoccupied with the "periodization" of their history. "Modern history" (*chin-tai-shih*), it now seems generally agreed, denotes the period from the first Opium War of 1840 until the May Fourth Movement of 1919. But to accept this definition of modern history apparently can raise some embarrassing questions for the Marxist-cum-emotional nationalist Chinese historian. In the words of one of the participants in the periodization discussions, "If we employ a foreign war of aggression against China to mark a division point in the periodization of our history, do we not then become proponents of the primacy

of external causation?" There is a latent anxiety that to assign so large a role to foreign incursions in the structuring of China's history verges on abandoning the belief that this history was capable of its own autonomous development. This is almost to cast doubt on the "value" of one's own past. An uneasy resolution is reached by asserting that "external causes only manifest themselves through internal causes." But this is an emotional rather than an intellectual solution, which permits a generous share of the blame for "evil" to be assigned to the foreigner, while still maintaining that "Chinese society internally already possessed the prerequisite for the appearance of change."

Perhaps it is comforting to dispose of the problem in this manner. But there is an obvious paradox in Mao's statement that "the history of imperialist aggression upon China, of imperialist opposition to China's independence and to her development of capitalism, constitutes precisely the history of modern China." Is not this assertion a form of "imperialism" itself, a self-inflicted historical imperialism, as poisonous to the construction of a new and valued past for the "New China" as "foreign imperialist aggression" allegedly was to China's independence and to her economic development? Could a Western historian get away with putting the main dynamic force in modern China outside of the stream of Chinese history itself? That such a formulation could be long-lived in China, where history for millennia has been explicitly recognized as first of all a defender of the key values of Chinese civilization, seems improbable.

What, if I may attempt to draw up a balance sheet, has ten years of concentration on the foregoing problem areas contributed to re-establishing the meaning of the Chinese past? Peasant rebellion as the main content of Chinese history is a chimera. Too much emphasis on China's independent parallel development with the West toward capitalism has unwanted political implications. The "formation of the Han nation" leads either to the postulation of China's uniqueness, which Marxist orthodoxy cannot accept, or to metaphysical nonsense. If "imperialism" is the key to modern Chinese history, that history stands in danger of losing entirely its autonomy and hence its meaning.

Clearly Chinese communist historiography is in danger of being meaningless. It has failed to provide the régime with a neatly packaged past that will call forth unquestioning intellectual and emotional commitment from its readers. However veiled their references to this matter may be, the Chinese communist historians themselves have not been able to repress the anxiety that their services will become supernumerary in

the new China. The continuing—perhaps even accelerated—publication of articles devoted to the topics that I have surveyed is in part motivated by the hope that these issues, if pressed, really can yield a precipitate of meaning. Other signs of this unrest are apparent both in the policy statements of the political leaders of the historical profession and in the tack which the writing of history has most recently taken.

Let me cite but one example out of many. In 1958, in a survey of the progress of mainland historiography in the years since he had launched the Chinese History Society on its way with a most optimistic speech, Kuo Mo-jo, president of the Academy of Sciences and a leading scholar of ancient history, had occasion to inform his colleagues that in that 1951 address "I was trying to give everyone encouragement, so what I said was more or less what I hoped for. To judge from present conditions, the speed with which our historians have changed has not been so great as I expected. . . . Our scholars' understanding of Marxism-Leninism is not yet profound enough and not yet unanimous. We must still make greater efforts in our ideological revolution." This is not an isolated criticism; another historian-politician has recently characterized the great majority of mainland historians as "still elementary students of Marxist theory." Why—after ten years of ideological remolding, continuous indoctrination in Marxism-Maoism, and so on—are the historians in the People's Republic of China still told by their leaders that their major shortcoming is their lack of a profound grasp of Marxist theory? It cannot be that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is an inadequate set of tools for the job they have undertaken, the reconstruction and revaluation of China's past. Then it must be that the historians have been clumsy with their scissors and paste.

What way out of this most unsatisfactory state of affairs? One way was to "emphasize the present and de-emphasize the past" (*hou-chin po-ku*). From the early part of 1958 this slogan was taken up and broadcast in all the important historical and political periodicals on the mainland. *Hou-chin po-ku* had a double edge. On the one hand it was meant to be taken literally as a guide to dividing the pie of available historical manpower and other facilities. But it also indicated a tightening of the political screws so far as the historians were concerned. The historians had not done their assigned job well because, in the view of the Party, they were still ideologically backward. This was attributed to their isolation from the great struggles of the masses of workers and peasants to build a socialist society. They had failed to solve the problems of the past because they

did not adequately comprehend the present. History, therefore, must be increasingly "politicalized" and the historians pulled out of their ivory towers into the current "struggles." I need hardly emphasize that in the terms in which I have set forth the problem of re-establishing the meaning of China's past, "emphasizing the present and de-emphasizing the past" is not likely to avert the crisis of meaninglessness that Chinese historiography faces. The reluctance of such problems as periodization, evaluation of peasant revolts, the origins of capitalism, and so on, to yield a satisfactory solution cannot be ascribed to inferior Marxist tailoring. Quite the contrary.

While the historians continue to be urged "thoroughly to expose the hypocritical viewpoint of the bourgeoisie and establish the Marxist viewpoint instead," as if in recognition that this might not be enough, there has most recently appeared another candidate for the first string of Chinese communist historiography. He is none other than the celebrated general and poet Ts'ao Ts'ao (155–220), the most prominent character in the exciting epoch of the downfall of the Later Han dynasty and known to every Chinese as the villain of the famous novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. In the past the evaluation of Ts'ao Ts'ao among historians, both traditional and "progressive," has more or less corresponded to that of the novel: able and crafty, but wicked and unscrupulous. However, since the early part of 1959 the case of Ts'ao Ts'ao has been wisely discussed in mainland newspapers, periodicals, and scholarly forums and, it seems, the judgment of the past completely reversed. Ts'ao Ts'ao's errors and shortcomings are referred to, but the general tenor of the discussion is to consider Ts'ao Ts'ao as having made "a greater contribution to the development of the nation and its culture than any of his contemporaries." The key word is "nation," for the principal reason for the re-evaluation of Ts'ao Ts'ao is his asserted contribution to *fu-ch'iang*, enriching and strengthening the Chinese nation. And along with the refurbishing of the once villain Ts'ao Ts'ao has gone a call for the re-evaluation of many others, *not* popular heroes or leaders of peasant revolts, but emperors, generals, statesmen, and scholars of the "feudal" past—such as King Chou, the last ruler of the Shang dynasty, the first Ch'in emperor, Han Wu-ti, T'ang T'ai-tsung, and the Ch'ing emperors K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung—on the grounds that they, too, played "positive" roles in the history of China.

These recent developments, I suggest, are potentially of great significance for the problems which the Chinese communist historians face

in finding meaning in their history. Although there has been no Chinese equivalent of M. N. Pokrovsky, the approach to China's past through such topics as peasant rebellion, capitalist origins, and periodization is in a number of ways similar to the tendency in Soviet historiography associated with the name of that Russian historian. Pokrovsky, who dominated his profession until the 1930's, and his adherents presented their materials "in a theoretical and schematic form," writing an almost anonymous history of the movement and clash of social forces. They "portrayed all pre-Soviet institutions and personalities in a sarcastic vein. This did not meet the needs of a regime that wished to stimulate patriotism by rehabilitating selected personalities, and to present Russian history in an interesting narrative form suited to secondary school education."[3] After his death Pokrovsky was heavily attacked and Soviet historiography moved steadily onto a more nationalistic tack which culminated in the near chauvinist output of the World War II period. It seems to me that the rehabilitation of Ts'ao Ts'ao is analogous to the post-Pokrovsky re-evaluation of Ivan the Terrible, for example, by Soviet historians. It represents a shift in emphasis from the *popular* past to the *national* past. I hasten to add that neither need exclude the other, nor can one say with assurance how far the change will go in China. Yet I am led to believe that the re-opening of the case of Ts'ao Ts'ao is part of the most recent attempt by the mainland historians to cope with the threat of a meaningless past. If the re-evaluation of Ts'ao Ts'ao and the other "feudal" figures is in fact carried out on the basis of their "contribution to the people and to the development of the whole nation and to cultural development," then the mainland historians will indeed have taken a long step toward replacing a *Chinese* meaning in their past.

notes

1 C. E. Black, ed., *Rewriting Russian History: Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past* (New York, 1946), 7.

2 Data supplied from an unpublished paper prepared for a study of information and publishing systems in mainland China for the social, natural, and applied sciences. The study is sponsored by the Association for Asian Studies, and supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

3 Black, *Rewriting Russian History*, 15.

M. H. VAN DER VALK

Assimilation and Chinese Law

For a long time it has been generally assumed, even by some of the greatest authorities in the field, that the Chinese have always absorbed their nomadic conquerors. That Chinese civilization exerted a most important influence upon neighbouring states and tribes has justly been considered by Chinese writers as proof of their society's strength and attractiveness. But they have insufficiently realized that in many instances Chinese civilization never succeeded in absorbing either foreign aggressors or non-Chinese tribes in what these days is the interior of China, that the process was not always a continuous or smooth one, and that, on the other hand, Chinese culture absorbed elements of foreign civilizations in its turn.

If the assumption of assimilation were generally valid, in the realm of China different legal systems, as prevailing in non-Chinese tribes settled in China, would only temporarily uphold themselves, pending their absorption or supersession by the Chinese legal system. In Chinese history there seem to be only a few examples of this ultimate consequence. Of the Jewish colonies in China, especially that at K'aifeng, it is reported that at the beginning of this century there was no other distinction between the Chinese and them than that they did not worship idols. Intermarriage with non-Jewish women is considered to have been conducive to this degree of assimilation with the Chinese. The same cause lay at the bottom of the assimilation of the Russians who were enlisted as a separate company in the Manchu army by the end of the seventeenth century. They were completely sinicized, although at the time they were allowed to adhere to their religion. If this was a more or less natural process, it is likely that compulsory interracial marriages contributed to the disappearance of the colonies of Arabs who had settled in some coastal cities of China since the T'ang dynasty (618–907). At any rate a policy of promoting interracial marriages was followed during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which had been left with the problem of foreign colonies in China.

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Many foreigners served the Mongol dynasty as soldiers or as civil officials; the Mongol Emperor at Peking had a Russian bodyguard in 1330; besides in several garrison towns in the country there were Russian, Korean, Turkish, and other troops. The Chinese leaders soon introduced a policy to reform the barbarians through Chinese customs which were to supersede their own. This was the idea behind a paragraph that soon appeared in the code of the dynasty and which, instead of a policy of separation, as was often followed during the Mongol dynasty and earlier, introduced one of assimilation. Mongols and members of tribes in the far West of China would be allowed to conclude marriages with Chinese, both parties willing. They were prohibited from concluding marriages with persons of their own race, unless no Chinese could be found as a partner. It is openly admitted in the commentary to this article that the prohibition is motivated by the fear of increasing the number of foreigners in China and that the purpose is to keep foreign races in subjection. Exception to the rule of compulsory assimilation is explained by the fact that these foreigners are considered very ugly by the Chinese and not desired as partners. The policy must have been successful, for sixteenth-century Western observers saw none of these colonies except that of the Jews at K'aifeng.

So far the thesis of assimilation of foreigners by Chinese and of disappearance of foreign law and its supersession by Chinese could largely be supported. In the case of the Manchus, however, the picture becomes more complicated. Although originally a nomadic people, they were already imbued with quasi-Chinese ideas when they entered the country. They had engaged to a certain extent in Chinese farming; they had encouraged the use of irrigation and showed interest in matters of flood control. Both before and after the actual conquest many Chinese cultural elements were acquired; the Manchu language soon was neglected, and before the end of the seventeenth century, only forty years after the conquest, died one of the great poets of the Manchu dynasty, a Manchu noble who wrote Chinese verse. Yet other factors prevented a rapid absorption of the Manchu victors by their Chinese subjects. When in the first decades of the seventeenth century the Manchus captured Chinese garrison towns in Manchuria, they usually massacred the Chinese population. Gradually, however, they adopted a policy of co-operation with the Chinese, at least in name. One aspect of this was the promotion of marriages between Chinese prisoners of war, and those civil officials who had joined the Manchus, with Manchu women. These men were to

be given daughters of Manchu nobles and officials according to rank; on the other hand, widows and daughters of Chinese soldiers were to receive Manchu husbands. Privates were to be adopted by Manchus with marriageable daughters who were to become their spouses. Instead of assimilation of Manchus to Chinese and absorption of foreign elements by Chinese civilization, these Chinese were assimilated to the Manchus.

The same phenomenon is noticeable in the establishment of the so-called Chinese banners of the army. The Manchus organized their national fighters in eight banners, which in the course of time were paralleled by eight Chinese and eight Mongol banners. These Chinese banners were partly composed of persons who had voluntarily joined the Manchu army when it invaded China, or who enlisted afterwards of their own volition; and partly also of men who were incorporated against their will, such as ordinary criminals and followers of the leaders of the great rebellions in the second half of the seventeenth century. A small group was the gunners who were engaged by the Manchus at the beginning of the dynasty. If these were linked to the Manchus for political reasons, or reasons of safety, other additions were made to the Manchu tribes as organized in their army through civil law transactions: Chinese adopted for the sake of charity by Manchus, as well as the children of a Chinese widow who remarried a Manchu. All these persons can be safely designated as naturalized Manchus, Chinese who were assimilated to the conquerors and came within the sphere of their law. In the case of the latter groups the assimilation took place through the means of a Chinese legal institution, thus governing the relation of the subjects of two different legal systems.

On the other hand, in one respect the reception of Chinese law by the Manchus served to separate the two races. For the purpose of retaining the strength of the army the Ming dynasty had promulgated provisions tending to exempt soldiers from the punishment of banishment and transportation and to commute it by the cangue, a wooden board through which the offender's head was thrust so that the board rested on his neck and shoulders, and which he was obliged to wear for a certain period of time. The commutation to the cangue was therefore made with a view to military service and the army. When, however, the Manchus adopted this in order to prevent deficiencies in their own army, it came to mark the difference between conquerors and conquered. For every able-bodied young Manchu was registered as a soldier and thus one committing an offence was differently treated from a Chinese in the same

position. If this resulted in preferential treatment for Manchus, other rules purporting to maintain discipline in the army put them into a disadvantageous position as compared with the Chinese people. For example, gambling by Manchus was much more severely punished than the same offence committed by a Chinese.

In the course of almost three centuries these differences, and others, had by no means been effaced and a list of discriminating provisions between Manchus and Chinese, published in 1908 when the distinction was to be removed from the legislation, contains more than fifty items. Some of these were concerned with maintaining discipline in the army: for committing violence after a drinking bout Manchus were at once referred to the highest authorities and liable to transportation; when a Manchu had committed the offence of wounding a person with a knife, he would never be allowed rations; there were still very strict provisions against the use of opium by soldiers. On the other hand, there were provisions favouring Manchus, such as the greater possibilities for Manchu offenders to take their families with them when being transported; or that first offenders of theft were only to be cancelled from the Manchu registers, a deprivation of civil rights as it entailed many disadvantages. Although in the course of the reforms of the 1870's the special courts for Manchus had been abrogated, traces of special procedural rules were left. Completely unreasonable were special rules for offenders committing a crime against their military superiors, as these were not applicable in the Chinese army that had come into being during the great T'ai-p'ing rebellion, about the middle of the nineteenth century.

That these differences still existed may not be regarded as evidence that the process of gradual assimilation was not yet completed. Fluctuations of policy sometimes slowed it down, at other times accelerated it. The initial policy of promoting intermarriage between Manchus and Chinese was in the course of the seventeenth century suspended and replaced by one of separation of the races and of prohibition. The prohibition of intermarriage was formally repealed in 1902, when an Imperial edict explained that at the beginning of the dynasty the prohibition was based on a difference in usages and language. Long before, it had been made possible for Manchus to take Chinese wives, who were thus assimilated to their husband's tribe; but the reverse was only allowed to Chinese bannermen, that is, naturalized Manchus. Although facilities for the change of status from Manchu to Chinese had been provided, the measures taken to warrant economic independence from the Chinese underwent

considerable changes during the reign of the dynasty. When first the Manchus invaded China, large tracts of land were assigned to military leaders, sometimes with and sometimes without the eviction of the original owners, who in the latter case were henceforward under an obligation to pay a regular amount to the new overlords, besides being subject to the customary dues and taxes. These grants were made with the condition, implied if not expressed, of military service, to be rendered to the sovereign when required. The new owners as a rule were just rent receivers and not agricultural entrepreneurs; besides, they owned and exploited real property in Manchu conditions. They were prohibited from alienating the land to Chinese, thus maintaining a distance between the races. With the lapse of the Manchu organization the rule was for some time and in some places relaxed; but there was little consistency in these matters. This was specially applicable when these lands were actually transferred to Chinese by way of the institution of *tien*, a sort of security right in which the "mortgagee" took by way of interest the fruits of the land he tilled and which he only returned after a number of years upon repayment of the sum borrowed. As the Manchu owners often proved unable to refund the money borrowed upon the expiry of the term agreed, the matter was left in abeyance and the question of the ownership became unclear. In 1810 it was therefore forbidden to alienate or give in *tien* Manchu lands to Chinese; but during the reign of Hsien-feng (1851–1861) it was allowed. The prohibition was reintroduced in 1889, to be definitely rescinded in 1907. Conflicting tendencies lay at the bottom of these vagaries of policy: for political reasons it was mostly considered advisable to maintain the separation, except for a period of time in the nineteenth century; the exigencies of the state treasury, however, made the rulers more inclined to allow the transfer of land, which on account thereof became liable to the ordinary fiscal impositions.

Summarizing we find that the acculturation of the Manchus, a foreign race that had adopted many cultural traits from the Chinese, was by the end of their rule over China by no means complete. Conscious efforts had to be made to efface the difference in legal status, but survivals of non-Chinese institutions continued to exist even after the revolution of 1912. The process of assimilation was sporadic and at times even retrograde, conditional upon the actual circumstances and policies of the country.

The problem of assimilation and reception of law displays several new traits in the case of the Mongols, who when they conquered China had

not to any large extent been sinicized. When first large tracts of land came within the orbit of their power, they were content with the application of the code their predecessors, the foreign tribe of the Nüchen, had promulgated for their Chinese subjects. It was to a very great extent based on previous Chinese examples and must have shown little foreign influence. It was formally abrogated in 1271 and not replaced by a new one: the Mongol rulers are said to have been inclined to uproot the whole economic structure of the country by turning the tilled fields into pastures fit for Mongol economy; and their total abrogation of the Chinese legislation for their new subjects may be considered as an expression of their intent to change the legal system correspondingly. These far reaching economic changes did not take place and no corresponding laws were promulgated. The Mongol rulers actually proclaimed special rules for their Chinese subjects in several separate laws and ordinances that were less radical. These sometimes repeated provisions well-known in the previous Chinese codes; for example, the prohibition of marriage between persons bearing the same surname, the legal protection of a ritual rule of ancient standing. Soon also was confirmed an old rule against the marriage of slaves and free persons, tending to maintain the distinction in status between the classes in society. Next to provisions of this kind, however, the Mongol legislators tried to introduce reforms in the family law of the Chinese, which may be considered as an effort to deliberately reform and improve upon the existing situation, with a view to prevent difficulties that had shown themselves in practice. As a result, definite rules were given concerning the value of betrothal presents to be given by persons, differentiated according to the status of officials or civilians. Here there is some influence of Mongol conceptions in the legislation for Chinese: instead of supersession of Mongol law by Chinese, there is rather a tendency to the reverse, a fact more clearly brought out by the provisions concerning the compulsory levirate.

The levirate is said to have existed among several non-Chinese tribes in the border lands of China, such as Turks, Uigurs, and Mongols; it equally existed among the Huns and in many other tribal societies. Even in our days the institution is, or was, known among such non-Chinese tribes as the Lolos in South China and the Miao tzu in Central and South China. It may, however, not too readily be assumed that the institution was confined to these "foreign" Chinese, for there is evidence of cases in some "purely" Chinese provinces, such as Shansi, Shensi, Kiangsi, Anhui, and Chekiang, in comparatively recent times. In some places, if

levirate was not compulsory, at any rate no objection was made by the persons concerned against the marriage of a brother's widow either because the family for the sake of poverty could not take in marriage another person, or because the widow had no means of livelihood, or just because of ignorance of the law. It even occurred that notice of such a marriage was given to the head of the local police, notwithstanding the fact that Confucian morality considered such a marriage incestuous, and that the code made it liable to severe penalties. In view of the tenacity of this kind of institution it must be assumed that also in Mongol days it existed in some places in China. Foreign dynasties, which preceded that of the Mongols, sanctioned their tribal custom by inserting in the code a clause providing for the compulsory levirate, which was, however, not applicable to their Chinese subjects. Under Mongol rule there were initially some doubts about the course to be followed: first the exceptional provision for Chinese was introduced, to be replaced shortly afterwards by one cancelling it. In some cases even before the enactment the rule was enforced when invoked by persons who claimed a brother's widow in complete disregard of the ritual traditional rule. The new rule was even applied in a case where a betrothal with another person, an indispensable preliminary for marriage not easily to be nullified, had been concluded. In conflict with tradition that required absolute obedience to the parents was also a decision that allowed a son to marry his brother's widow, although they opposed this. The application of the newly introduced Mongol rule could not, therefore, initially be prevented by either Chinese ritual rule or opposition of the interested relatives; only practical considerations made the conquerors allow deviations, such as a great difference in age between the woman to be married and the prospective bridegroom, or the fact that the woman who was claimed in marriage had to look after her own father. Once a younger brother was refused his brother's widow because that wife in time of famine had been sold and married to a different man. In the long run, however, Chinese conceptions took the upper hand: the edict was repealed seventeen years after its promulgation. This is an example of an effort to enforce a foreign institution in Chinese law, which had, however, some points of contact in the situation of the country. In other words, it is a case of assimilating Chinese law to that of the conquerors, an effort which failed in the main.

More successful probably were rulings about a son-in-law who enters his wife's family for a certain period to care for her parents in their old age. This was a temporary marriage, to be dissolved either upon expiry

of the contract, or if the son-in-law absconded, being discontented with either his wife or the circumstances of the work he had undertaken to do. This practice existed in China before the Mongol occupation and the new rulers did nothing but normalize the situation, which ran counter to everything Chinese, or at least Confucian, morals had always taught. Of a different nature were judicial decisions which, although not rejecting the tenets, tried to make allowances for the practical difficulties of their application. Some cases of marriage during the period of mourning for either father or mother, or husband, furnish examples of this. This ritual rule was of old standing and laid down in the code; but its enforcement was doubtful. Wives of officials deceased far from their native place had neither the means to return there, nor means of living; under Mongol rule they were allowed to marry. Matters became more complicated when there was evidently incompatibility between two ritual rules: that of providing a successor to the clan, and that of observing the required period of mourning for a deceased father or mother. The first duty was not quite as well protected by the law as the second. In cases of this nature there was gradually a tendency to revert to Chinese tradition, which in the long run retook its rights. Nevertheless, in the code that was set up by the end of the Mongol dynasty several non-Chinese traits are evident.

After the fall of the Mongol dynasty, that of the Ming (1368–1644) tried to restore the old code of the T'ang dynasty; it was found unworkable and replaced by one in which several traits introduced under Mongol rule are evident. Although some Mongol colonies after the fall of their dynasty may have become sinicized, a process facilitated by the fact that they had lived in China for generations, there can be no question of wholesale assimilation of the conquerors and their law by Chinese, as according to the generally assumed thesis.

Another field where its validity can be tested is that of the relations between Chinese and indigenous tribes in the interior of China, such as the Miao tzu, or those in the border lands of China, for example, Burma, where the Shan tribes live. All through Chinese history they presented a problem to the rulers of the country and policy towards them was not uniform. The Chinese government sometimes found itself compelled to refrain from efforts to bring any changes in the government of the tribe; at other times, it had to be contented with assenting to a government by hereditary chieftains, to whom Chinese official titles were given; in comparatively rare instances it succeeded in replacing this system by the

ordinary Chinese system of government. In the former case the authority of the Chinese government over these people, who, according to international law, were certainly its subjects, was purely nominal. As long as they did not openly rebel they were deemed to be subjected; if they showed themselves openly hostile, they were pushed off to the mountainous districts, their original domains. The subjects were under an obligation to pay land tax, but would meet it only at their convenience, and a Chinese official who dared to go for inspection would be in danger of his life. This is reported of some sub-divisions of the Miao tzu in Hunan province in the eighteenth century. The question of assimilation or reception of Chinese law can under these circumstances not arise. In other parts of the country, such as Kueichou province, the process of assimilation had set in, and a distinction between subjected and non-subjected Miao tzu was made. The subjected were under orders of Chinese officials; they were only distinguishable from Chinese by their head-dress. The non-subjected were under the control of hereditary chieftains, originally petty officers in the army of the first Emperor of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), who, however, in their turn had become part and parcel of the Miao tzu and were no longer considered as foreigners, that is, they had become assimilated to them. The Chinese judicial organization had been partly received: the hereditary chieftains had a right to sentence in criminal matters, but not to capital punishment. Appeal could be made to the Chinese mandarin of the ordinary rank, superior to the chieftain. It is evident that under these circumstances the more characteristic laws and customs of the aborigines remained unchanged, such as those on family law. The tendency to assimilate themselves to the higher Chinese civilization was counteracted by the repressive measures taken by the Chinese government at particular times and places. In the eighteenth century the increase of population made Chinese farmers develop parts of Miao territory. Coupled with an effort to introduce ordinary Chinese governmental organization in the Miao territories, this led to protracted and inconclusive wars with the indigenous tribes. The effort of the Manchus to compel them to shave their heads as an outward sign of subjection, just as the Chinese, contributed to the disastrous results of the operations against them.

At other times a more careful policy was followed, necessitated by the exigencies of the relations with a foreign power, such as Burma, with whom China had perennial border disputes. With regard to the popu-

lation of the Shan states, a policy of divide and conquer was introduced: the most capable chiefs among them were enfeoffed; they were given Chinese official titles and empowered to maintain law and order. These officials were largely sinicized, and among them there were even several who were originally Chinese. Next to this organization the original native organization continued to exist, that of the feudal lords and chiefs of communities. The power of these lords was far greater than that of the Chinese-type officials: they had power of life and death, of levying taxes and corvees; on the other hand, the heads of communities were nominated for a limited period of time. Evidently the process of acculturation or assimilation was mutual and that to a very limited extent. On the whole Chinese and aborigines remained in their own legal spheres, although the aristocracy adopted Chinese custom in matters of marriage, thus creating a great mark of distinction between them and the common people whose matrimonial customs were much less strict than those of the Chinese.

The more permanent features of policy towards non-Chinese populations during the Manchu dynasty can best be discerned from several provisions in the code and other legal documents. For all that these provisions were never intended to form a systematic whole, some general principles can be deduced from them. The authorities were bent on keeping relations with individual Chinese under strict control if they could not prohibit them; consequently, lending and borrowing between Chinese and persons of non-Chinese origin was in general forbidden. Chinese travelling merchants who wanted to trade in Miao tzu territories had to be provided with passes, in which conditions were made for their dealings during their stay for a limited period. It goes without saying that marriages between these traders and aborigines were not allowed. In this way the several elements of the populations were partitioned: instead of assimilation there was separation. Assimilation of Chinese with other races was promoted where it could serve the interests of the state, when thereby its influence among the non-Chinese was increased and stable conditions ensured. Chinese who had managed to settle in the districts of the Miao tzu were allowed to marry aboriginal women, in the form required by Chinese law, contraventions of which were punishable with the Chinese punishments. Thus native law only gave way to Chinese in what were exceptional cases. Equally on Formosa Chinese were forbidden to marry aboriginal women; but if the woman had borne

children she was to stay with her husband, cutting off all relations with her own people.

Of the same nature was the policy of the Manchu authorities with regard to contacts between Chinese and their so-called Mongol allies. Chinese who wanted to trade in Mongolia needed special licenses; they were not allowed to develop pastoral lands; they could not lend to or borrow from the Mongols. On the whole there was no supersession of Mongol law by Chinese; only after the fall of the Empire, when Chinese colonization in Inner Mongolia went on apace, was the resident Mongol population under the pressure of circumstances often compelled to adopt Chinese law.

With the advent of the Republic in 1912 arose the question of supersession of Mongol and Tibetan law and legislation by the new Chinese legislation. Some authorities held that these would be applicable to all Chinese subjects on Chinese territory as equality of races had to be observed. This argument falls into line with the efforts made by the government at Peking in the first decades of this century to exercise more effective control over the internal administration of Tibet, notwithstanding treaty obligations to refrain therefrom. The Supreme Court at Peking, however, defeated this effort as far as large domains of private and criminal law was concerned. On the other hand, in the Provisional Constitution of 1912 and the constitution of 1923, Tibet was considered a province of China in which, according to the latter, the ordinary Chinese provincial administration was to be established, although provisionally the old system could be maintained.

The attitude of the Nanking authorities after the establishment of the Nationalist government in 1929 is akin to that of the Peking government. The Judicial Council, the *Ssu fa yüan*, held that the old legislation for Mongols and Tibetans in parts of Kansu province was to remain unchanged and that the law was to be based on their old customs. This was in opposition to the opinion of the appellate court, which thought that several peoples of the Republic could not be allowed to have divergent systems of law. Actually for several minority peoples conditions remained as they had been before, that is, a large measure of the native law applied, notwithstanding efforts to supersede it by Chinese law. In the case of Tibet, which was under nominal suzerainty of China, its government exercised exclusive domestic authority within its territory and there can have been no question of the application of Chinese law up till 1950.

The Chinese constitution of 1946, it is true, considered Tibet as a self-governing province of China (in its article 120), but this claim was specifically refuted by the Tibetans. That Chinese influence in Mongolia had further advanced is clear from the preceding article, which stipulates that the local self-government system of the various Mongolian leagues and banners shall be prescribed by law. There is no mention of any special system for minorities which are enclaves in China.

The constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic of 1931 recognized in its article 14 the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China, and the formation of an independent state for each national minority. All Mongolians, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Koreans, and others living on the territory of China might either join the Chinese Soviet Republic or secede from it as they preferred. Thus there is no question of superseding their own legal system by the Chinese. It is further to be noted that the right of secession was also conferred upon the non-Chinese in the interior of China, although its execution would have met with considerable difficulties. When the communists had established their power over all the country, a different attitude was adopted. In chapter VI of the Common Programme of 1949, which served as a provisional constitution, the right of secession is no longer mentioned but expressly denied: article 50 states that all nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic are equal. They shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves and acts involving the splitting of the unity of the various nationalities are prohibited. Regional autonomy shall be allowed to areas where national minorities are concentrated; they shall be free to develop their dialects and languages, to preserve or reform their traditions, customs, and religious beliefs. As according to article 67 of the Chinese constitution of 1954, the autonomous organs of all autonomous regions are to be formed in accordance with the principles governing the organization of local organs in China proper. With regard to article 50 of the Common Programme, it all depends whether stress is laid on the preservation or on the reform of customs and usages. The paragraph from the constitution at any rate opens the way for a complete subversion of the non-Chinese constitutional and administrative organization of these territories, to be superseded by a purely Chinese, unless a special agreement exists. In the case of Tibet the constitutional structure was formally changed by the establishment of new organs of state by the Chinese, notwith-

standing an undertaking by the Chinese government not to alter the existing political system in Tibet, as laid down in article 4 of the Seventeen Point Agreement of 1951.

Less radical measures of assimilation to the Chinese legal system were taken in other domains of law. Article 27 of the Marriage Law of May 1, 1950, makes it possible that in regions inhabited by national minorities certain modifications or supplementary articles in conformity with the actual conditions in regard to marriage prevailing among them may be enacted; such measures must be submitted to the central government. It is not known to what extent these exceptional legislative measures have been taken; other documents show that the equality of all citizens of the People's Republic of China, as laid down in article 85 of the constitution, has not yet resulted in solving the problems of intermarriage between the different races and religions of China. Legally they are not subject to any restrictions, but actually the usages, customs, and religious rules are not disregarded in matters of intermarriage: when they forbid marriage outside the race, such a rule shall in practice be observed. Persons insisting upon the equality of races and the freedom of marriage, guaranteed by the constitution and the Marriage Law, are exhorted to conform to the usages of the race, in order to avoid contrary feelings among the masses. These marriages may not impede, it is said, the rallying and uniting of the masses. More difficult for the communist authorities are the prohibitions of marriage between two classes of the same indigenous tribe, as in the border lands of Ssuch'uan and Tibet; for these problems no adequate solution seems as yet to have been found. The commune system has also been introduced in non-Chinese tribes; it has brought about a total disruption of their own pattern of self-government, but it is not yet clear to what extent it has influenced other domains of native law.

In China, as elsewhere, the reception of foreign law has been a highly complicated process. Instances in which native law gave way completely before Chinese law are rare: they are almost exclusively confined to small communities cut off from their base. Partial assimilation was conditioned by divergent factors; sometimes this was temporary. In our day a new factor may contribute largely to the reception of Chinese law: the drive for a totally new economic system which at the same time comprises the administrative organs, that is, the commune. It may bring about a more permanent and far-reaching assimilation to the Chinese way of life and Chinese law than ever before.

W. A. C. H. DOBSON

Micius

The period from the sixth to the third century B.C. was, in the history of Chinese civilization, the Age of Philosophy. During those four centuries, there flourished in the city-states of North China what the Father of Chinese History[1] later called "The Hundred Schools."[2]

The Hundred Schools posed those problems of life and the world the solutions of which became the matrix in which the distinctive ways and thoughts of the Chinese people have been cast. The Masters of the Schools formulated their philosophical systems, their pupils recorded them, and the literature they left has provided the models not only for thought, but for language itself, for their writings later became classical in the strict sense. The period was China's Periclean Age. The great names of the period are as familiar throughout East Asia as those of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in the West. They serve to remind us that the civilizations of the East have been engendered and conditioned by a philosophical tradition as ancient as, though very different from, our own.

Confucius, Mencius, and Hsun-tzu of the Traditionalist School and Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu among the Mystics, are names that are becoming familiar in the West. The names of Yang Chu the Epicurean, of Kung-sun Lung the Sophist, of Shang Yang the Legalist, and of Han Fei-tzu the Realist are less familiar. But one philosopher neglected and almost forgotten, even in his own country, has after an eclipse of nearly two thousand years recently enjoyed a vogue and influence in China. He has been brought to the fore again, though belatedly, as one of the foremost thinkers of his age. The philosopher is Micius. His name is a latinized form of the Chinese *Mo-tzu*, hence the terms Mohist and Mohism, used respectively of his school and teachings. Micius flourished some time between 479 and 381 B.C. and was thus a contemporary of Socrates. His life falls between the death of Confucius and the birth of Mencius. Soon after his death his influence was acknowledged by his contemporaries.

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Mencius complained that "the whole world was succumbing to the teachings of Micius and of Yang Chu the Epicurean." But his influence was shortlived. By the first century B.C., when the Father of Chinese History came to sum up the virtues and vices of the Hundred Schools, the thought of Micius was curtly dismissed with the words, "Mohists are exemplars of self-discipline and the ascetic mode of life. Asceticism is a burden to the flesh but the Mohist protest against luxury is a needed one." The Great Historian devoted but fifteen words to the biography of Micius. Henceforth, the name of Micius was kept alive only in the works of his detractors, and his doctrines were known principally through the cautionary references to them in the writings of his opponents. The literary works of his school, however, were preserved in the great Imperial libraries, and their titles figure in the periodic catalogues. The task of editing the texts of the classical period has been carried on continuously from the beginning of the Christian era, though it assumed new importance from the twelfth century onwards. But the *Works* of Micius was overlooked. As a result, the modern text is a very corrupt one. It has, however, recently been edited, and several versions with critical apparatus have been published. Although the new editions still do not bear comparison with the quality of the scholarship of the more favoured texts, we have a reasonably well-established body of material—sufficient at least to gain a glimpse of Micius' principal teachings. Of these, three are treated here: the doctrine of universal love, the political principle of utility, and Micius' most arresting innovation, the formulation of the *Canons of Logic*.

II

Thought grows in environment, and in introducing Micius something must be said of the age which produced him. We are confronted simultaneously in China and in Ancient Greece by a sudden and seemingly unaccountable efflorescence of the human mind. It is possible partly, though not wholly, to account for this by environment and historical factors, though ultimately we remain to marvel at the very fact of its happening. Without some understanding of how Chinese philosophy came to be, and of the environment in which it grew, however, Chinese philosophy will appear to the western eye as thin, or simple, or simply incomprehensible.

The Philosophic Age began in the sixth century. The economic historian would note that many of his key dates occur in the seventh. Iron was introduced then, together with a knowledge of its manufacture. A coinage came into circulation, bearing a legend indicating the mint town. A group of merchants is mentioned sufficiently organized to negotiate terms of status and operation with their prince. Mention is made, too, of state-industry, of monopolies in the manufacture and distribution of salt, and of state-controlled marketing for fish. In short, into the comparatively simple agrarian economies of locally self-sufficient communities, whose only external factor was the sending of tribute, there were suddenly thrust those disconcerting complications in the economy of specialized production, of inter-regional trade, and of a basis other than that of the storing of commodities for the accumulation of wealth. These shifts in the economic sphere introduced deeply rooted disturbances into the social equilibrium, and social change led to political unrest. It is above all to the rise of the city-state, and to the problems of its polity that Chinese philosophy addressed itself.

The city-states evolved from the garrison towns set up at the Chou clan settlement during the eleventh century. The term for city-state is *gwo*—"a walled city." It was conventionally a mile square. The word *gwo* came later to mean "a kingdom," "a state," but for long after the period we have in review, it meant "city," and had no territorial connotations.The writ of the city-state rulers ran no further than the city wall and the enclosures containing the farms and hunting parks of their private domain. The rulers of the city-states, originally drawn from collaterals of the Chou ruling clan, formed an aristocracy, bound by ties of blood and of the clan to the royal house, owing it religious and familial duty. Rule passed hereditarily in the senior line of the collateral clan. Prior to the seventh century such rulers had called themselves *Kung* ("Duke"), but even then certain of them had assumed the title of *Wang* ("King"). The royal domain of the ruling clan was no larger in territorial extent than that of the city. In the eighth century, the clan ties of city ruler to the royal house weakened, and the royal domain, unable to withstand a hostile attack, had shifted eastwards and became, no more and no less, another city-state, and a religious monument to a religious tie that was no longer binding.

The patents to the titles of the city authorized its hereditary rulers to

maintain family shrines (an aristocratic worship), to guard the shrine of the soil and crops which was in their keeping (the popular worship), and gave them authority as liege-lords over the persons of the aborigines, of inferior clansmen, and of certain tribes that were transported at the time of the settlement. The *min* ("common people") enjoyed the usufruct of the land they cultivated beyond the city and paid taxes to the city, in exchange for which their deities were served and their operations protected from outside attack.

When the rulers of the city-states came to rule as independent princes, their succession and authority were at first unquestioned, but during the seventh and sixth centuries authority in the city passed first to obligarchies, to coalitions of powerful aristocratic families of which the triumvirate known as the Three *Huan*, in the city-state of Lu and the Six Families (*Liu Hsiang*) of Tsin are examples. These were political coalitions not bound by purely family ties. Soon the oligarchs, not agreeing among themselves, sought in the person of some wise and acceptable though socially minor figure, a minister through whom to govern. Just prior to the Philosophical Age, certain of these sage figures had gained a great reputation for skill in administration, and more particularly for astuteness in diplomatic negotiation. Prominent among these were Tzu Ch'an of Cheng, Yen Ying of Ch'i, and Shu Hsiang of Tsin. They excelled in rhetoric, and records of their speeches form part of the literature of the period. From aristocratic prince to aristocratic oligarchs, from oligarchs to statesmen, there was one stage further, the tyrant—the commoner seizing absolute power in the city. This last stage Confucius witnessed in his lifetime in his own city-state in the person of Yang Hu. It was in the welter of political speculation about how best to govern the city that philosophy was born.

An increase in social mobility among the aristocracy is discernible at this time. Certain aristocrats turned mercenary and attached themselves as clients to patrons. Others became merchants engaged in interstate trade (the word for "commerce" is *shang*, perhaps from the descendants of the rulers of the Shang settled in the state of Sung). Others hired themselves out as tutors to the sons of the nobility, or opened schools. They called themselves the *Ju*, "the gentle" or "the yielding." They taught the arts of city-state life, ceremonial and ritual, reading and writing (using the ancient anthologies of court and folk songs, and of state

documents as their textbooks). Their pupils formed a coterie, later becoming their followers or patrons. Soon distinctive schools and leading figures appeared among them. They began to circulate among the city-states, offering to the princes their theories of government and the services of their pupils. By the fourth century the peripatetic philosopher was a familiar figure at the courts. Some rulers staged public debates for them, and rival theories were thus argued and aired. One ruler, the Lord of Ch'i, opened an Academy, at which the leading philosophers of his day lectured. This foreshadowed the academies of the imperial period—the direct ancestors of the modern Chinese university.

The Philosophical Age was thus ushered in, in a bewilderingly complex period of change and innovation. Economic and social forces were abroad, the natures of which were but faintly understood at the time. But they posed problems for which nothing but a prolonged period of thought and speculation would provide an answer. The problem, however, was always thought to be political: how to restore order and equilibrium to the city-state, an equilibrium which was still alive in the memory but which had been shattered by recent events.

In the event, the states themselves collapsed, to be supplanted by a single, centralized empire. But in the final answer to the problem of achieving political equilibrium, many schools contributed a part. The judgment of posterity upon the Hundred Schools was based partly upon the extent to which their ideas survived in the final solution. In this view, the Confucian School emerged to prominence and the Mystics came next in Chinese estimation. But today we are concerned to judge philosophical systems by criteria other than their practical success. It is with this in mind that we approach Micius.

III

Mencius' thought stems from Confucius. It is a product both of a class, and of the class-room. Confucius taught the sons of "gentlemen." Gentlemen were commonly addressed at the time by noble titles, which had long since lost any connotation of rank, and had come simply to be used as forms of address. One such is *chün-tzu* ("prince"). Around the title *chün-tzu* the Confucian school built a code of ethical behaviour, the code of the "true Prince." It was as it were the apotheosis of their own

class. The political role of the *chün-tzu* was to be that of administrator in a proposed restoration of the unified one-clan government of the eleventh century. In this restoration, oligarchs, tyrants, traders, and mercenaries would play no part. Such a system did eventually come about, in the Empire, with the Son of Heaven ruling a vast *Guojia*. The Confucian *élite*—the gentlemen administrators—became its civil servants. But this was far from realization in Mencius' day and indeed remote from the reality he himself envisaged. The Confucians argued from authority, from the *Songs* and *Documents* of antiquity, and from precedent. Their method was scriptural. Mencius' ethics are essentially the systematization of ideal aristocratic behaviour, and his politics an advocacy of a reversion to a supposedly glorious past.

Yang Chu the Epicurean, the first of Mencius' two main rivals, argued that the city-state, far from being redeemable, was past recovery. Man's main concern, therefore, should be for himself. He should seek, in a perilous age, for the preservation of his person, and the cultivation of his own integrity. He should refuse to become involved in material things, and should offer no hostage to fortune by indulging unfruitful desire. Above all he should avoid involving himself with his fellows. Against the virtues of social order, Yang Chu raised the banner of individualism. Rather than save the city, he thought it more important to save a single life.

Yang Chu left no writings. His philosophy is recovered from the references to it of his opponents. A work sheltering under his name called the *Garden of Pleasure* is a much later and perhaps spurious compilation. His reputation has suffered like that of Epicurus and largely for the same reasons. Nevertheless, the contemporaries of Yang Chu attest to his influence in his own day. He was perhaps the precursor of the contemplatives and mystics who followed shortly after him, known best through the names of Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu. From despair for the cities it was but a step to take to the hills. Where the Confucians sought authority and demonstration in the documents of antiquity, the mystics appealed to an authority and inspiration of a quite different sort. The shamans of tribal days still survived among the aborigines and nomads. Their techniques, involving the flight of the soul from the body in trance, were still practised. Some of the hymns inspired by the shamans describing the ecstasy of the flight and the dolour of the aftermath are preserved and are among the most beautiful poems of Chinese antiquity. The

shaman lived outside of the social order, and beyond the compass of the city-state. To these the individualists fled and among them Taoism was born. Taoism regarded the city-state as a man-made contrivance utterly foreign to the design of nature, and looked upon ethics as an artifice, shackling man to the city, and inhibiting the liberation of his soul. Society, as it existed in the city-state, was life on an unnatural plane. In nature, everything is so of itself. Nature is amoral, uncontrived, and spontaneous. Freedom and self-realization lie in "riding to the limitless," cruising freely in the realization of identification with the universe, and a oneness with all things. To all counter-arguments the Taoists replied that the authority of the ancients and the arguments of reason belonged to an inferior level of knowledge, the utter irrationality of which is plain only to the adept in trance. True knowledge was of the transcendental kind, and access to it open only to the initiate. This put their critics at a disadvantage, but left the Taoists free to mock their rivals unmercifully. This they did with great wit, even challenging the Sophists on the level of formal logic and reducing their axioms to seeming absurdity.

Micius represents the third of the three streams of influential fourth-century thought. Though trained in the same Confucian tradition as Mencius, Micius had no use for authority, but he was not above quoting canonical authority to discomfort an objector. He had no use for mystical intuition, and the long passages devoted to refuting Mician logic in the writings of the mystics show how formidable was the opposition that his schools were able to set against mysticism. To Micius the central problem was that of order: order in society, and order in the city-state. And that problem could only be attacked by rejecting authority and precedent and by starting *de nouveau* in the pure light of reason. He arrived at his axioms deductively and then proceeded to argue inductively from given premises. He argued that the sum total of human experience attests to the existence of a Deity. The Deity has a purpose, a will. That will and purpose is conceived in love and compassion. Order is the ultimate manifestation of the Divine compassion. We must inquire into the causes of disorder, for then only can we cure its evils. Since all men have the ear of Heaven, it follows that all are equal in the eyes of Heaven. Heaven rains upon the just and the unjust. Heaven manifests its love upon all regardless of person. It therefore follows that men should love one another without discrimination, and with equal intensity.

This notion of universal love, in a class-ridden and family-centred

society was thought to be subversive of human life itself. "It outrages all human feelings," protested Mencius. Confucians had precisely codified canons concerning the duties and affections that should govern the respective members of the joint family and of the orders of society. They were graded, as it were, according to seniority and closeness of relationship. The notion that a man had equal and undifferentiated duties of affection to all men, regardless of his place in the family and social hierarchy, seemed, to the Confucians, to undermine the very structure of society. Yet Micius proceeded to demonstrate that no man or woman, if presented with a choice of action, would not choose one dictated by universal love. Behind this word "love," Micius piles adjectives, "all-embracing," "completely reciprocal," to underline his point. Would society break down under the compulsion of universal love? No, said Micius, every man understands what conduces to his own benefit, and every man that which works for his harm. The common consensus of the common good, this is the criterion, and the common consensus opts for universal love.

The common consensus of the common good. This leads Micius into his two political axioms, that of the common weal—the greatest benefit to the greatest number, and that of the common accord—the theory that the policy producing greatest benefit must be acceded to by all. It seemed to follow that only the most competent, irrespective of class or family, were fit servants of the commonwealth. And to them should go its greatest honours and its greatest rewards.

It is not surprising that, as early as 1882, Mr. Faber of the Rhenish Mission (though apparently without reading Micius) should observe, apropos of Micius and in defence of Mencius, that "the advocates of socialism and communism were getting the upper hand."[3]

In Micius' system the highest moral act of the individual was to be found in making sacrifices for all. To this end he and his pupils formed a sworn band of brothers, engaged in extreme asceticism, wore a distinctive dress and regalia, and rendered total submission to the leader of the order. We are reminded of our own religious orders. To the order, war was, of course, the very antithesis of universal love. The order therefore declaimed forcefully against aggression of any kind. Its opponents argued that war was a scourge in the hands of the righteous and fighting in a righteous cause was itself righteousness. The Micians argued that war itself was evil. But this did not prevent them from arguing that the greatest good

might conceivably lie in warding off aggression. To this end, a branch of the School devoted itself to the arts of the defence of the city. One of their oddest byproducts was the invention of a number of fortification devices, and the *Canons of Logic* contain references to mechanics and optical principles—doubtless arising from their concern with military engineering—which are among the earliest scientific observations in the language. In their day, any city which invited the Mohist order to undertake its affairs was assured that the defence of the city would be conducted by men devoted to the idea that its greatest good might lie in the sacrifice of the defenders' own lives. There is an interesting trace of this notion in the Chinese language to this day, for *mo-shou* "Mohist defence" is a term for stubborn unreasoning defence.

But it was pre-eminently in the defence of doctrine that the Mohists excelled. The western reader, passing from the chaste though discursive writings of Mencius and the wit and poetry of the Mystics to the writings of the Mohists, finds neither charm nor grace. No one reads Micius for its literary flavour. But if such a reader had despaired of finding ordered presentation and close reasoning in classical authors he finds it in almost tedious measure in Micius. The Micians had to convince men that the *mores* of their class were outdated and subversive of order. They had to argue this in open debate. Their opponents could count on a measure of acceptance for their arguments, since the Mystics challenged no one's interests, and the Confucians purported to advance that of their hearers. Micians had to rely on pure reason. The study of the means and techniques of demonstration which they undertook was finally contained in a manual, the *Canons of Logic*. They were not the only school to do so. Sophists and dialecticians proliferated towards the close of the fourth and during the third centuries, but none of their works have survived except in collections of citations and fragments. The Mohists alone left a Canon of Logic. It is at present the most difficult text in the whole of the literature of Chinese antiquity. Its modern significance was first recognized by Hu Shih. Writing in 1928 he says: "For my own part, I believe that the revival of the non-Confucian Schools is absolutely necessary, because it is in these schools that we may hope to find the congenial soil in which to transplant the best products of occidental philosophy and science." And further,

> My interest in the re-discovery of the logical theories and methods of Ancient China is primarily a pedagogical one. I have the strongest desire to make my people see that the

methods of the West are not totally alien to the Chinese mind, and that on the contrary they are the instruments by means of which and in the light of which much of the ancient treasures of Chinese philosophy may be recovered.[4]

No one yet has produced a satisfactory account in a modern language of the Canon and its system. It should be rewarding to do so. As Needham says,

> . . . the Mohists . . . clearly laid down what could have become the fundamental basic conceptions of natural science in Asia. We see their work, of course, through the dark glasses of corrupted texts and ingenious emendations. But the minute details of it are not really so important as the broad fact that they sketched out what amounts to a complete theory of scientific method. They treated of sensation and perception, of causality and classification, of agreement and difference, and of the relations of parts and wholes. They recognized the social element in the fixing of terminology and nomenclature, and they distinguished first-hand from second-hand evidence.[5]

Of the quality of the Canon it is difficult to judge, but of its importance there can be little doubt. In the interests of the history of thought, it deserves study by a logician qualified to expound its system and to assess its significance.

IV

To the Mencians, the city was perfectible and its future assured, if only its rulers would consent to a political restoration, to a return to the *status quo ante*, when oligarchs and tyrants had no place, and when the virtue of the Son of Heaven overshadowed and nurtured all. They viewed man, or at least "gentlemen," as perfectible, and as natural servants and supervisors of the ideal state. To the Epicureans, the city was past repair, and in its ultimate collapse man must look to himself. The individual would endure, and he should ensure his own salvation. In the last resort he should flee the city, and take to the hills. In the Mician view, both the city and its life were all awry but they did not despair. The city needed reformulation. They looked to a completely egalitarian state, where the competent governed in the interests of the majority. The guiding principle of its polity was to be utility, the cohesive of society—universal love. The city ultimately must save itself by an exercise of the human will and the human imagination.

Towards the close of the third century, the city-state disappeared altogether, to be replaced by a unified empire, in which all authority

was placed in the hands of the emperor, and the land was divided into provinces, and was governed by regional administrators, servants of the Emperor. Land passed into the hands of private owners, aristocratic title and status was abolished, and authority, in the form of legal codes, was administered by bureaucrats and enforced in the courts. We think the rule of law a virtue. The First Empire, whose polity was inspired by the Legalists—the advocates of "rule by law"—was a period of harsh and arbitrary totalitarianism. The Chinese, from this brief taste of what to them was a complete innovation, think "law" execrable. Within a century, legalism was dead. But the Empire had come to stay. Its civil service was recruited from among "scholar-gentlemen," and the new class of Confucius' day, upon which Confucius had worked so sedulously, gained its final goal. From that day up and until 1911, the Empire was governed by scholar-gentlemen, educated in the classics, trained in the disciplines first laid down by the Confucian school. But Confucianism offers no solace to the individual, and the Epicureans and Contemplatives lived on in the hearts of men if not in political institutions, and found their expression in painting and poetry. The final solace of the scholar-gentleman, upon attaining a pension and retirement from state service, has been to flee the city and take to the hills and seek his own salvation. The Confucians and the Contemplatives thus survived. Micius was forgotten, forgotten at least for two thousand years. But when in recent times the Empire reached the state at which its thinkers felt that an entirely new reformulation of both the state and of society was needed, Micius once more sprang to life, as a forerunner and as a precedent for its possibility.

notes

1 I have tried to avoid burdening the reader with unfamiliar Chinese names by substituting for them descriptive epithets such as "The Father of Chinese History" for Szu-ma Ch'ien, or by adding to them, as, for example, in "Yang Chu the Epicurean," and "Kung-sun Lung the Sophist." But this device should not mislead. The resemblance between Chinese schools of thought or historical figures and those of our own classical antiquity is superficial at most, and often grossly misleading. Yang Chu's name is coupled with the maxim *wei ngo* ("I act in my own interests") and his detractors associated his teaching with a life of unbridled pleasure. Kung-sun Lung coined a series of paradoxes, of the type of "A white horse is not a horse," which his opponents regarded as mere sophistry. Szu-ma Ch'ien is the author of a classic history upon

which the great dynastic histories were modelled. But the reader should be aware that, as far as is known, there were no contacts or mutual influences between Greece and China in the philosophical age. Such resemblances as might suggest themselves therefore are purely fortuitous.

2 The term "Hundred Schools" (*pai chia*) has a contemporary echo in the slogan "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools contend" with which the communists launched the short-lived "Hundred Flowers" movement in 1957.

3 E. Faber, *The Mind of Mencius* (London, 1882), 16.

4 Hu Shih, *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China* (Shanghai, 1928), 8–9.

5 Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge, 1956), II, 182.

DAVID HAWKES

The Supernatural in Chinese Poetry

In the Introduction to *170 Chinese Poems*, first published more than forty years ago, Arthur Waley amusingly contrasted the different images of themselves which European and Chinese poets project: the European presenting himself as the great lover, the Chinese as the sympathetic friend; the European bare-headed and unbuttoned as though half choking with emotion, the Chinese a quiet and timid recluse; and so on.

Those who are familiar with Chinese verse in translation might feel tempted to add that whereas the European poet has inherited a somewhat complicated amalgam of Christian eschatology and Greek mythology (to name only two items in the clutter of mental furniture at his disposal) and is almost over-stocked with symbols, his Chinese counterpart is by contrast a severely secular poet from whose world not only the passions, but all the gods have fled, leaving the sympathy, sensibility, and charm of an urbane and refined humanism, but little of the fire and force that we associate with poetic inspiration.

True, the Romantic notion of a poet is outmoded, supplanted—possibly since Mr. Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land*—by the image of the "*doctus poeta*," who is not ashamed to be cerebral and not particularly anxious to seem inspired. And, though there are a few poets like Graves for whom the old mythologies are still alive, poets nowadays do not as a rule evince nearly so much interest as they once did in Olympus, Arcady, or Elfland, or even in Heaven and Hell. Nor is it any longer fashionable to have immortal longings or intimations, to swoon, or to be rapt.

Nevertheless, much of the greatest European poetry has drawn heavily on Christian and pagan tradition—frequently, as in the case of Milton, fused in ways that would seem incongruous if they were not so familiar; and the Romantic picture of the inspired poet is actually a very ancient one in European tradition, indeed, not really Romantic at all. For the ancient bard, we learn at school, was *vates*, a "seer"; the conventional

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invocation of the Muse, perpetuated in polite Augustan verse, was originally the half-crazed cry of the chosen vessel abandoning himself to divine possession.

Taking a long view, one has the impression that the need for inspiration (being "breathed into" by the god) and for some sort of mythology is endemic in Western poetic tradition. It seems worth taking another look to make sure whether it is really entirely lacking in China.

The T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618–906) is frequently referred to as the Golden Age of Chinese poetry. Certainly Chinese critics have often placed the peak of poetic achievement in that era. Western scholars and translators have tended to echo the Chinese assessment; and it is, I think, largely from the translations of T'ang poems that we derive our impression of Chinese poetry. Now poetry in the T'ang dynasty was one of the avenues to an official career. The Civil Service, in which the majority of educated men aspired to pass their lives, required verse composition in its entrance examinations. It follows that the typical T'ang poet was a bureaucrat, whose poems not unnaturally reflected the preoccupations and aspirations of bureaucratic life. "Occasional verse" is extremely common throughout the course of Chinese literary history, but it is characteristic of the T'ang era. The typical T'ang poem reveals the author travelling to or from an appointment, carousing with his colleagues or taking an outing to some pagoda or beauty spot with them on a half-day, planning a country cottage, worrying about the failure of home mails, and so on. Such poetry may sometimes rise to great heights, but seldom has the universal appeal of most good Western verse. There is a poem written by Tu Fu in 757 which I find unbearably poignant; but I think at least half the pathos lies outside the poem in the poet's situation:

> The state may fall, the hills and streams remain:
> Spring in the city; trees and grass grow thick.
> The flowers shed tears for the sadness of the time;
> The birds are startled with shock of separation.
> The beacons have burned for three months continuously.
> A letter from home is worth ten thousand taels.
> I scratch my white poll; soon of my scanty hairs
> There will not be enough even to hold my hat-pin!

Admittedly, my translation is a somewhat jejune one. But even after making allowances for the translation, it seems to me that the real pathos of the poem can only be felt if you know the circumstances in which it was written, that is, when the poet was trapped in enemy-occupied

Ch'ang-an, desperately worried about the fate of his family two hundred miles away.

There is nothing very "poetical" about this poem. The only poetic conceit it contains is the use—and not a very striking one—of the pathetic fallacy in the second couplet. The rest consists of a number of bald statements of a kind that could be made at almost any level of communication. ("I would give a hundred dollars for a letter from my folk" is the sort of sentiment one might expect to hear in a store or tramcar.) The effectiveness of the poem lies in the shift of mood. The first couplet observes that Nature cares nothing for human disaster. The second discovers that Nature is not indifferent after all, but participates in human sorrows. The third couplet is the real subject of the poem. In the last couplet the poet rounds on himself with the kind of wry self-mockery that one might use in writing a letter to a friend.

The poem thus passes through three different moods: first the feeling of unreality—that this is defeat, and yet one has to keep pinching oneself because everything looks just the same; secondly the real anguish that cannot be quite suppressed, because the poet has not heard from his family; and finally the brave attempt to laugh it off by assuming the *persona* of a funny old man (he was forty-six at the time, but prematurely aged by sickness and worry).

Most people would agree that there is a good deal more in this poem than at first meets the eye; but I think it does mostly depend on the relationship of the poem to the particular set of circumstances in which it was written. The circumstances happen to be tragic and moving ones in this case; but obviously, where the situation is not intrinsically a particularly moving one, as will usually be the case in occasional verse, the poem itself will tend to lack strong feeling.

A T'ang poet who often comes near to the Romantic conception of inspiration is Tu Fu's contemporary, Li Po. It seems relevant to observe that he was not, like most contemporary poets, a civil servant, but a drunkard, a bohemian, and a Taoist who believed in and practised alchemy and claimed to be an earthly representative of the Taoist divinities. Li Po is remarkable for an exuberance of spirits which overflowed from his life into his poems. A passionate enjoyment of drinking, whoring, sightseeing, of flowers, music, colours—all the pleasures of the flesh and the beauties and splendours of nature—is communicated in such a way that the reader becomes infected by his intoxication, and, though perhaps disapproving of his morals, or even of his character (which was in many

ways unendearing), falls as much under the spell of his magnetism as his friends did so many centuries ago.

In the following poem he describes a vivid dream:

Seafarers tell of Ying-chou, the Immortal Isle,
Half-hid in mists and breakers, hard to find:
But T'ien-mu mountain that the men of Yüeh speak of,
Cloud-wrapped or radiantly revealed—this one might hope to see!
T'ien-mu, skyward lurching, lost in sky,
Dwarfs the Five Peaks, screens Red Cliff Mount from sight;
And T'ien-t'ai, eight and forty thousand fathoms high,
Seems to reel back before it towards the south-east.
So, I thought, I would like to dream of Wu and Yüeh.
I flew in a night over moonlit Mirror Lake,
And the moon, that showed my dark shape in the lake,
Followed me all the way to Shan-hsi stream.
The place where Hsieh lodged is there still.
Swift ran its limpid stream; above, the chilled apes keened.
Wearing Hsieh's climbing shoes I began
To ascend the rocky stairway through the clouds.
Half up, I saw the sun below the sea's edge,
And I heard Heaven's cock crowing nearby in the void.
My way wound uncertain, over crags, through ravines without number.
Dazzled, I sank back on a rock, and suddenly it was dark.
Bear's growl and dragon's roar resounded by cliff and torrent,
And terror gripped me of the deep forests, the towering peaks.
Black, black the clouds loured, fraught with rain;
Mist from the restless waters rose;
The lightning flashed, the thunder pealed;
Peaks, ridges toppled and crashed.
With a roar the door of the mountain yawned open wide,
And there were revealed vast bottomless depths of blue,
And a sun and moon shining on terraces of silver and gold.
Girded in rainbows, on steeds of wind,
The Lord of the Clouds with a great throng descended.
Tigers struck psalteries, phoenixes circled;
The ranks of Immortals stood dense as a flax-field.
Then my spirit was startled and my soul shaken:
I rose with a start and a sigh of disappointment—
Before me were only my usual mat and pillow,
And the clouds and glory of a moment past were gone.
Even so are the joys of this earthly life:
Always everything has passed, like the eastward-flowing waters.
I leave you now; what time shall I return?
My white deer I loose to graze among the verdant heights,
And when the time comes I shall ride it to that mighty mountain.
How could I fawn before those who hold this world's power,
Suppressing all the gaiety of my life?

T'ien-mu is a real mountain in Chekiang; but Li Po's dream description reads more like the vision of an opium-eater than the eye-witness account of a mountaineer. As a matter of fact, Li Po probably did take drugs occasionally. Chinese alchemists did not discover the elixir of life, but they stumbled on several quite potent drugs while looking for it. Some of the drugs taken by Taoists are said to have created a compulsive desire to walk or climb, and it has often been said that there is some connection between drug-addiction and the early development of Chinese nature poetry. However, it would be wrong to suppose that the wild imagery of this poem is the product of imagination and narcotics. T'ien-mu was, as a matter of fact, believed to be the site of one of the Taoist Earthly Paradises, many of which were hidden inside sacred mountains, rather like the bright land into which the Pied Piper led the children of Hamelin. Only a rather high-grade Taoist mystic would be privileged to see a paradise with his waking eyes; but Li Po would naturally expect to see the paradise if he visited the mountain in a dream. That part of his vision is not, therefore, original. Nor, as a matter of fact, is the night journey of his soul, or the vision of the Lord of Clouds descending, or, indeed, almost any other circumstance of the dream one cares to mention. Not that the poem as a whole is not tremendously original. All that I am saying is that the supernatural elements in the poem were not invented by Li Po, but formed part of the stock-in-trade of all Chinese poets. To understand something of this stock-in-trade, one must examine the poetry of an earlier epoch. Consider the following three passages:

(1) I think how long is the road to the great City,
And many a time each night my soul has gone speeding there.
But alas, it did not know the twists and turns of the road,
So it took the moon and stars as guides to lead it southwards,
Thinking to fly straight there; but still it could never reach it . . . .

(2) The spirits, descending, darken the sun.
In my blue cloud-coat and my skirt of the rainbow,
Grasping my bow I soar high up in the sky. . . .

(3) I yoked a team of jade dragons to a phoenix-figured car,
And waited for the wind to come to soar up on my journey
In the morning I started on my way from Ts'ang-wu;
In the evening I came to the Garden of Paradise.
I wanted to stay a while in those fairy precincts,
But the swift-moving sun was dipping to the west.
I ordered Hsi-ho to stay the sun-steeds' gallop,
To stand over Yen-tzu mountain and not go in.

Long, long had been my road and far, far was the journey:
I would go up and down to seek my heart's desire.
I watered my dragon steeds at the Pool of Heaven,
And tied the reins up to the Fu-sang tree.
I broke a sprig of the Jo-tree to strike the sun with:
I wanted to roam a little for enjoyment.
I sent Wang Shu ahead to ride before me;
The Wind God went behind as my outrider;
The Bird of Heaven gave notice of my comings;
And the Thunder God told me when all was not ready.
I caused my phoenixes to mount on their pinions
And fly ever onward by night and by day.
The whirlwinds gathered and came out to meet me,
Leading clouds and rainbows, to give me welcome.
In wild confusion, now joined and now parted,
Upwards and downwards rushed the glittering train.
I asked Heaven's porter to open up for me;
But he leant across Heaven's gate and eyed me churlishly . . . .

These three extracts were all written about a thousand years before Li Po's poem. The second is from a Hymn to the Sun; the other two are from longer poems. The poet in the third extract, it will be noted, is behaving almost indistinguishably from a god; for gods ride through the sky in chariots drawn by dragons, surrounded by attendant spirits; and that is precisely what the poet in the third extract is doing. The first extract implies, just like the Li Po poem a thousand years later, that in dream travel the soul actually leaves the dreamer's body; while it has this in common with the third extract, that both are about a supernatural sort of travelling. In the first extract the journey is made by the fluttering, helpless soul of a dreamer; in the third it is made by a magician who, though not quite powerful enough to obtain an entrée to the Heavenly City, is nevertheless able to summon and order around quite an impressive array of nature gods and mythical beasts.

What is this religion of poets which has nothing to do with Confucianism and Buddhism, which has much in common with Taoism and yet is much older?

It was the Old Religion which supplied the Chinese poet with his mythology—the religion of the witch, or medium, or shaman (the facts are not in dispute, so that scholarly disagreement about nomenclature is irrelevant). As in Europe, it was superseded, discouraged, persecuted, and mocked, but somehow survived in one form or another into modern times. Moreover much of it was incorporated into Taoist belief and

practice and there gained a slight degree of respectability. The deities worshipped by shamans in Ancient China were the gods and goddesses of rivers, mountains, stars, rain, wind, clouds, the sun, the moon, and so on. In addition there were the mighty dead, the divine ancestors and hero-kings of the past, each with his own cult and cult-centre. Shamans and shamanesses worshipped the nature gods by enticing them down from the sky or the mountains or up from the rivers (wherever their dwelling was) with singing and dancing, and engaging with them briefly in quasi-erotic dalliance. It seems likely that the arrival of the god or goddess with attendant spirits was mimed by other shamans suitably costumed and perhaps masked.

I have already cited a short passage from the Hymn to the Sun in the *Nine Songs*, a cycle of poems probably dating from the third century B.C., which were used by shamans in the worship of a number of nature gods. Here is the beginning of the Hymn to the Lady of the Hsiang (a river goddess):

> The Child of God, descending the northern bank,
> Turns on me her eyes that are dark with longing.
> Gently the wind of autumn whispers;
> On the waves of the Tung-t'ing lake the leaves are falling . . . .

The undisguisedly erotic nature of the relationship between god and worshipper appears also in this extract from the hymn to the Master of Fate:

> He drives his dragon chariot with thunder of wheels;
> High up he rides, careering heavenwards.
> But I stand where I am, twisting a spray of cassia:
> The longing for him pains my heart. . . .

But shamans had other tasks besides the invocation and entertainment of the gods. They also summoned back the wandering souls of the sick and the dead. A long poem from about the same period as the *Nine Songs* begins the summons by listing all the terrifying things the soul would encounter away from home, in the east, west, south, north, or in the sky above, or below the earth:

> Oh soul, come back, for the west holds many perils:
> The Shifting Sands stretch on for a hundred leagues.
> You will be swept into the Thunder's Chasm and dashed in pieces,
> unable to help yourself;
> And even should you chance to escape from that, beyond is the empty desert,
> And red ants as huge as elephants, and wasps as big as gourds.

Poems like this teach us quite a lot about the geography of this primitive, magical world. Other sources of information are the early philosophers and ritualists. This table-shaped world, slightly tilted in one direction since an early theomachia in which a demon butted into one of the eight mountain pillars which sustain the sky (with the result that all the rivers of China flow in the same direction to the sea), has a realm of ice in the north and of fire in the south. Each of its four quarters is presided over by a god, by a spirit who is the god's assistant, and by a sacred beast, who also gives his name to a constellation. Thus the east is presided over by the god T'ai Hao, whose attendant spirit is Kou Mang, a bird with a human face; while its animal guardian is the Green Dragon. Instead of one sun there are ten. They roost in the branches of an enormous tree, called Fu-sang, which grows at the edge of the eastern ocean. Each day another of them is driven across the sky by Hsi-ho, the sun's charioteer. On the other side of the world, in the far west, is the great Jo tree, whose leaves give off the red sunset light. The far north, which the sun is always too far from to illuminate, is lit by the Torch Dragon. Somewhere towards the west is the magic mountain of K'un-lun and the Garden of Paradise. K'un-lun is God's earthly footstool, and if you climb to the top you reach the Gate of Heaven and can enter his holy city.

It is a cardinal principle in western magic that one gains power over another being by knowing its name. The Chinese magician seems to have gained superhuman power by riding through the air, preferably in some sort of celestial chariot, making a tour of this mandala-like universe, and commanding the fealty of the gods he encountered *en route*. In this way he would make himself like God, who, in the same way as an earthly king, would assert his authority and pre-eminence by means of a royal progress through the lands of homage-paying vassals. At least, this is the only way in which I am able to understand the many poems in which an aerial tour of this sort is the theme. (Witches are irreverent about the gods in a quite scientific way: Thessalian witches could call down the moon—a goddess—from the sky.)

The earliest poem in which a "secular" poet makes use of shamanistic themes is the *Li Sao*, probably written at the beginning of the third century B.C.* The *Li Sao* is an allegorical poem in which the poet tells, by means of rather elaborate symbolism, the story of his fall from royal favour because of the slanders of courtiers. It also describes the poet

*This is the poem from which the long third extract on pages 315-16 was taken.

making a supernatural journey to the magic mountain of K'un-lun, attended, in his passage through the sky, by a number of gods and spirits; and it tells how in his (unsuccessful) quest for a suitable mate he visited several legendary women, including a water goddess. The *Li Sao* poet is clearly indebted to the shamans for three of his themes: the geography of his cosmos, his spirit journey, his quest for the goddess. For centuries afterwards these themes were to recur in the writings of Chinese poets.

The third century B.C. *Li Sao* poet belonged to an ancient Chinese culture centred in the Yangtze River valley. Contemporary magicians of the north-east coastal area were, like the seafarers in Li Po's poem, interested in Isles of the Blest floating somewhere in the Eastern Sea, and in attaining the type of earthly immortality that was enjoyed by the inhabitants of those islands. Mystical techniques and, presently, alchemical means were employed in the attempt to become like the "Immortals" or "Fairy Men"—that is, able to fly, to exist without solid food, and to live for hundreds of years with vigour unimpaired. Imperial patronage, after the third-century B.C. unification of China, enormously encouraged these pursuits. Emperors wishing to acquire inexhaustible sexual potency or a life-span of several hundred generations showered honours, grants, and subsidies on experts with projects for obtaining the services of some powerful spirit, or for making expeditions to the Isles, or collecting rare herbs for the concoction of the elixir. Some of these magicians (perhaps not surprisingly) disappeared before their projects were completed. This was taken by the gullible to mean that they had attained the state of bliss and gone off to live with the Fairy Men. A number of magicians reputed to have become immortal in this way, Wang Ch'iao, Ch'ih Sung ("Master Red Pine"), An-ch'i Sheng, Han Chung, and others, became the admired patrons of Taoist adepts, and are constantly referred to in literature.

Just how sceptical a Chinese intellectual of any given period was likely to be would be very difficult to determine. What I think is quite clear from the above, however, is that the Chinese poet lived in a magical world in which the supernatural was always just a few paces away; in which fairyland might lie in the next valley, or a dazzling goddess appear on the mountain top. Whether one believed such things or not, they endowed the poet's world with a vividness and wonder in which imagination could thrive and luxuriate.

The precise degree of a poet's belief or unbelief in his mythology is a question that interests me very much. It may be, of course, that such

speculations are meaningless except in terms of Christian theology: that pagans do not either believe or disbelieve a symbol, but simply use it. And certainly people are much oftener able to exist quite comfortably in uncertainty than a Christian apologist might suppose. For instance, it is quite common in early Chinese texts to find people on their deathbeds saying, "If the dead have consciousness . . . ," as though they viewed quite dispassionately the possibility that they might not. However, I think this merely evades the issue, which really hangs on what people *expect* to happen, or, to be more precise, what they expect *not* to happen. Milton *expected* to rise incorruptible and inherit the Kingdom of God. He did not, presumably, *expect* to meet any of the nymphs or goddesses who frequent his verses when out for a walk. Or did he? The whole question of what one is to make of the Western poet's use of a mythology in which he is officially *required* to disbelieve is a fascinating one.

The "Goddess" poem, supposed to have been written by Sung Yü in the third century B.C., is in the erotico-religious tradition of the *Nine Songs*. Its author almost certainly did believe that a king out walking might encounter a goddess and enjoy her favours on the lonely mountain side. The beautiful "Goddess of the Lo" written in A.D. 222 by Ts'ao Chih, prince of Wei, in conscious imitation of Sung Yü's poem, in parts strongly recalls the Hymn to the River Goddess in the *Nine Songs*:

> There was no match-maker to bear my suit:
> The little ripples must be my messengers.
> To make my sincere affection known
> I took off my jade belt to offer as a love-pledge;
> And she, refined as she was beautiful,
> Skilled in courtesy, cunning in poetry,
> Offered a girdle gem as a requital,
> Told me to meet her in the river's deeps.

The supernatural figures frequently in Ts'ao Chih's verse. His "Ballad of the Immortals" is particularly interesting because it opens with a scene which rubbings taken from Han bas-reliefs have made familiar:

> The Immortals, holding the dice-sticks,
> Sit gaming in a fold of T'ai mountain.
> The Hsiang Goddess strikes her zither;
> The Maid of Ch'in blows her pipes;
> Cinnamon wine brims in jade cups;
> The River Lord serves sacred fish.
> The Four Seas are too cramped for me;
> In the world's Nine Lands I have nowhere to go.

But Han Chung and Wang Ch'iao
Wait for me in the sky's crossroads.
Ten thousand leagues is nothing!
Lightly I vault through space
And leaping soar over argent clouds.
A high wind blows my body onward,
And round I drift to see Heaven's starry palace
And match my tally with Heaven's king.
The Gate of God's City rises sheer,
The gate-towers ten thousand fathoms tall.
Jade trees line the road to it;
White tigers guard its doors . . . .

But this, in fact, is allegory, and neither here, nor in the "Lo Goddess," nor in any of Ts'ao Chih's "supernatural" poetry is there any reason to suppose that he attributed any reality to these things other than that which the poetic imagination lends. We are fortunate in possessing an essay by Ts'ao Chih in which the pretensions of magicians and Taoist adepts are debunked. A short extract will suffice to demonstrate his thoroughgoing scepticism:

His late Majesty my father kept the best-known magicians of the day at his court. There was a Kan Shih from Kan-ling, one called Tso Tz'u from Lu-chiang, and one called Hsi Chien from Yang-ch'eng. Kan Shih was an adept in breath control; Tso Tz'u was an authority on sexual techniques, and Hsi Chien had learned how to go without food. They all claimed to be several hundred years old. Actually the only reason for summoning them and keeping them at court was my father's fear that their followers might practise deceits on the ignorant multitude and delude them with harmful superstitions. He collected them simply in order to render them harmless. Why in the world would he want to view Immortals in the Blessed Isles, seek for An-ch'i Sheng at the sea's edge, leave his bronze chariot for a coach of clouds, or his excellent horses for a team of flying dragons? Indeed, my father, and the Crown Prince, and the other princes my brothers and I did not believe in such matters and often joked about them.

The rest of this quite long essay is in the same strain, and the same scepticism can be found elsewhere in his prose writings. This was a period in which increasing misery bred the grossest superstition among the peasantry; but educated men on the whole tended to be more sceptical. The anonymous poet who wrote

Those who by alchemy seek immortality
Are often by drugs undone.
Better to drink good wine
And wear fine silks.

was expressing a common sentiment.

Juan Chi (A.D. 210–263) relies almost entirely on the old mythology and its magical cosmos to provide the images in the riddling allegorical poems in which he so brilliantly and so bafflingly unburdened his heart.

The world's affairs are in such disorder
And man has such a little time.
The vigorous years are soon departed
As morning dew that the sun dries.
I would like to seize the reins from Hsi-ho,
But the bright sun will not deflect his light.
To Heaven's Stair the way is so distant;
And Heaven's broad River has no bridge.
I wash my hair by the Vale of Sunlight,
Or ramble by distant K'un-lun's peak.
Climbing those heights where the fairy host dwells
To pluck there the fragrant autumn orchid.
The world's race is not worth the running,
When you may soar free in the Infinite.

Poets might be entirely sceptical about the mythology which supplied their symbols, as in the case of Juan Chi just mentioned; but they differed from the post-Renaissance Western poet in knowing their mythology as a living thing. Li Ho (A.D. 791–817)—not be confused with Li *Po*, who lived a century before—was a brilliant young poet (he died at the age of twenty-six) noted for vivid sensuousness of description, a slightly eerie preoccupation with supernatural themes, and an almost decadent partiality for mouldering ruins and wet woods. One of his poems describes a scene which cannot have changed so very much during the nine or ten centuries that separate him from Ch'ü Yüan.

The shamaness pours a libation; clouds come crowding thick:
Fragrant smoke rolls from the charcoal fire in the jade incense burner.
Sea god and mountain spirit descend among the worshippers.
Paper money rustles noisily in the gusty wind.
On her guitar of Indian bean-wood where golden phoenixes disport
Heavily she strikes, at each sharp cry, wrenched from her with spasm of knit brows,
Invoking star and spirit to savour cup and dish;
And men blench cold as the mountain demon eats.
In the Chung-nan mountains the sun lies folded low.
And all the time the spirits in a half-existence, there and not there,
Are pleased or angry only in the changes of her face.
Ten thousand ghostly riders conduct them home to the green hills.

However true it may be that poets are capable of using for their imagery and inspiration a mythology in which they have long ceased to

believe, symbols have, as it were, lives of their own, and it is arguable that some of the characteristic mental attitudes that poets adopt may be in part formed by the symbols, rather than the reverse. Thus it seems to me that the constant employment of classical mythology instilled in the European poet a habit of personification (that this habit is not inevitably characteristic of poetry in general is proved by the fact that, with some small exceptions, Chinese poetry is almost innocent of personification). Whether for serious purposes, as in *Lycidas* or *Adonais*, or for amusement, as in the *Rape of the Lock*, the Western poet finds it natural to set about peopling the scene with shadows—Love, Death, Apollo, Pan, Echo, satyrs, muses, nymphs, etc., etc.—all personifying some sentiment about a static scene. Lycidas is drowned. That is all that *happened*. The young man cut the lady's hair. That is all that *happened*. But the habit of personification turns these static scenes into a busy hum of activity. By this device one could almost write an epic about an old man dozing in a chair. If one is to look for a single tendency in Chinese poetry which may have been similarly induced, I should say it was the attitude of escapism. The hundreds, perhaps thousands, of poems in which the poet who is afflicted by the world's annoys describes his flight, in trance or dream, by levitation or on swan's back or drawn in dragon chariot, through the sky, among the constellations and heavenly palaces, or to some Taoist land of bliss, use these as symbols of retreat—from office into a retired life, from action into contemplation, from the world of competitive ambition, intrigue, and greed to the world of spiritual self-fulfilment.

But there are less obvious instances. T'ao Ch'ien's (A.D. 372–427) "Peach-blossom Stream," about the fisherman who discovered a lost valley where refugees from earlier disorders had lived idyllic, tranquil lives, outside the stream of history and untroubled by its horrors for several hundred years, reflects this same tendency in the Chinese poet to escape out of this world into another one—or rather from one plane of reality into another one, since it is precisely the insistence that successful escape is always possible *in this life* that is so characteristic.

Often, of course, poets use their mythology merely in play, with no ulterior meaning whatever. I end with this charming song by Li Ho which, like Botticelli's "Birth of Venus," uses mythology neither from religious conviction nor as allegorical illustration, but simply in order to paint a charming picture:

Green peaks on the sea, where sacred books are hid,
Chosen by God to be the Immortals' home.
Their talking, laughing rings clear towards the sky
As they ride the breakers or race on backs of whales.
On Ch'un-lo silk an invitation to the Western Queen
Is writ, bidding her feast with them in the red chamber's innermost recess.
The stork, wind-buffeted, makes the sea-crossing slow:
Better to send the Green Dragon as postman.
But the Queen hesitates and in the end declines,
Letting fall her bewitching haze of hair, she changes the topic of conversation.

P. D. HANAN

A Landmark of the Chinese Novel

The *Chin P'ing Mei* is one of the great works of Chinese classical fiction—great in quality as well as in volume. It is also, I imagine, among the novels best-known to readers of English. There is more than one translation of it, and although even the fullest of these[1] is not a translation of the most authentic kind of edition but of an inferior "sub-edited" version instead, there is no doubt that it will give the modern reader an approximate idea of what the original is like.

Few of the facts we usually require about a work of literature are known in the case of this novel. The question of the author's identity has defied the guesswork of over three centuries. It is only by a good deal of luck that the date has been established at all. It was written at some stage between the years 1582 and 1596, and the discovery is owed to a chance remark about a current scandal made by a character in the novel and to a chance reference in a poet's letter.[2] Yet despite our lack of information about it, there has never been any doubt in any modern critic's mind that it represents a new departure in Chinese literature. It is only when we come to ask how it is different, and why it should be different, and just what kind of novel it is, that the answers so far given seem less than satisfactory.

It differs from earlier novels, of course, in one very clear way indeed—the manner in which it was written. Whereas the other novels are concerned with traditional story-cycles, and some at least are recensions of earlier written versions, the *Chin P'ing Mei* is to a large extent the product of one man's imagination. This is not by any means to say that it has no sources; on the contrary, it is a veritable storehouse of copied works, an anthology of popular literature at least as varied as any that has appeared until modern times. The point of difference is that it is less dependent upon its sources. The author chose to develop a single episode in an earlier novel, the great heroic novel of the fourteenth century, the *Shui hu chuan*,[3] and the circumstances of his choice meant that there was no large

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body of traditional material to which he might have felt obliged to adhere. Hence he has taken from earlier and contemporary literature only those passages which suited his purpose, adapting them freely as he thought fit. Even the episode from the *Shui hu chuan* which forms the starting-point of the novel has largely changed its significance. The centre of interest is no longer the hero Wu Sung, but a secondary figure, P'an Chin-lien, and a minor figure, Hsi-men Ch'ing. Wu Sung is no more than a kind of *deus ex machina*, whose re-appearance is delayed until the novel is nearly over. And the other two characters, in so far as they are delineated at all precisely in the *Shui hu chuan*, are subtly altered in the later work.

Yet one has to admit that this obvious difference, important though it is for the history of literature, really tells us very little about the novel. It is not at all obvious, merely because it is the work of a single writer, why it should lack the characteristics of the earlier novels, such as their episodic arrangement and their larger-than-life characterization. And a glance at the host of imitators of the heroic and supernatural kinds of novel will quickly satisfy us that this need not be the case at all. The fact is that the circumstances of the novel's composition are really the consequences of something else altogether. We must suppose that the purpose or preoccupation which engrossed its author must have led him to dispense with the ways of the old kind of novel, and to evolve a new kind.

This preoccupation has usually been related to the author's attitude (described as one of "realism") or to his subject ("ordinary life," "a cross-section of society," and so forth). And each of these terms could be defined in such a way as to be descriptively true of the novel. It is doubtful, however, whether the word "realism" is worth the time it would take to define it, and so I will examine instead the group of qualities, mainly relating to plot, character, and background detail, which differentiate this novel from the earlier ones.

One striking difference between the *Chin P'ing Mei* and all earlier fiction is its total rejection of the traditional kinds of plot. It is an interesting indication of the strong, if perhaps unconscious, sense of unity which the author possessed that those places in which an element of the melodramatic enters the novel have almost invariably been copied from other books. This applies to the long, rather circumlocutory account of Wu Sung's adventures which starts the novel[4] and also to the trials and tribulations of Wu Yüeh-niang on her journey to Mt. T'ai in chapter 84.

This adventure of Wu Sung is taken, as we have already noted, from an episode in the *Shui hu chuan*; the Yüeh-niang episode is compounded of passages derived from no less than four different parts of the same work. Another melodramatic incident—and another rupture of that unity with which the novel gradually impresses the reader—is provided by the murder of Miao T'ien-hsiu in chapter 47; yet this is copied almost entirely from a Ming crime story. Still another example is provided by the picaresque adventures of Hsi-men's son-in-law, Ch'en Ching-chi, in the last few chapters of the novel. Here, where the author seems unaccountably to relax his artistic grip, at least one of the adventures is derived from an earlier short story,[5] and I suspect that it may not be the only one. In the body of the work, there is only one incident which, I suppose, could be regarded as in any way melodramatic, and that is the murder of the baby Kuan-ko by P'an Chin-lien, although this can hardly be said to rupture the novel's tacitly-imposed unity. And even here, after the murder has been described, the author finds it necessary to add a little note to the reader, comparing the deed to one perpetrated in ancient history, and in effect justifying himself.

What has happened is that a great shift of emphasis has taken place from incident (in the sense of melodramatic incident) to character, and so pronounced is this shift that it is hardly possible to talk of "plot" at all in connection with the *Chin P'ing Mei*. This leads one to ask whether, after all, the kind of characters portrayed in the novel may not be its main distinguishing feature. It is true that the majority of them are "lifesize," that is, that they seem to us a fairly naturalistic representation of actual types of people. By contrast, the heroes of the *Shui hu chuan* seem, most of them, just a little enhanced, just a little larger than life, rather like the heroes of those Icelandic sagas which stick closest to actual events, like Gunnar and Skarp-Hedin in *Njal's saga*, for example. But it is doubtful if this is a useful distinction to make. The secondary characters of the *Shui hu chuan*, as well as the characters of some of the early colloquial short stories—certain of them precede the *Chin P'ing Mei* by several centuries—are equally "lifesize," although they belong to a narrower range of types. Here there is certainly one genuine difference. Whereas the female characters of the *Shui hu chuan* are, roughly speaking, either hoydens or Amazons, and the heroines of the short stories are often either plaster saints or *femmes fatales*, in the *Chin P'ing Mei* we are at last confronted with women of a satisfying, indeed astonishing degree of complexity.

This interest in female character is a feature which is found elsewhere in late-Ming literature. To take merely one instance, there is a long-short story in Classical Chinese called *The Autobiography of a foolish woman* (*Ch'ih p'o tzu chuan*) which purports to be the sexual history of a woman from a precocious childhood to a disillusioned and rejected maturity. The story is surprising because of the sympathy it appeals to in the reader; the narrator is Moll Flanders rather than the Wife of Bath, more sinned against than sinning. In this respect it reflects a characteristic temper of the later stories, which exhibit a leniency of moral judgment unknown to the early story-teller; characters quite often escape the direst consequences of their folly. The story is, of course, in the tradition of the erotic novel, and it may well be that it was the erotic novel, to which tradition the *Chin P'ing Mei* also belongs—although it transcends it by far, as *Hamlet* the revenge play—which was the first kind of fiction to portray women in any adequate manner. The other kind of literature which may have influenced this development is the popular song, which enjoyed a golden age in the sixteenth century. The genuine popular songs are a woman's literature, in that they are dramatic, and the "I" of the song is almost always a woman (naturally, since they were most often sung by singing-girls). This argument may seem somewhat far-fetched, but, in fact, the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* has himself indicated its validity by employing the unique device of the dramatic use of song in his novel. (What this means, put briefly, is that when their feelings are deeply stirred, characters sometimes break into song, the actual popular songs of the period.)

The *Autobiography* claimed to be personal experience, and this is how the *Chin P'ing Mei* also appeared, to the eyes of at least one contemporary, the poet and diarist Yüan Chung-tao:

> In years gone by, there was a Captain Hsi-men in the capital, who engaged an old scholar from Shaohsing to serve in his household. The scholar had little to occupy his time, and so day by day he recorded the erotic and licentious things that went on there. In the figure of Hsi-men Ch'ing, he portrayed his master, and in the other figures, his master's various concubines.

Although this interpretation need not, of course, be taken seriously, it is true that there is a great deal of authentic, contemporary detail in the novel, detail of a kind which makes it plausible to assume that a good part of the work derives from personal experience rather than from traditional, collective experience. It is impossible here to go into all the

cases in which the novel has been shown to represent the actual conditions of the time at which it was written. We have, in any case, already mentioned that the dating of the novel partly depends on a reference to a contemporary scandal—the squandering by the Emperor of certain funds. But there are two significant fields in which the novel, despite the fecundity of Ming literature on every conceivable topic, is especially detailed. In the history of the popular song, which is one of the most important new forms of the Ming dynasty, the *Chin P'ing Mei* is by far the most comprehensive source of reference. The other field is that of money and prices.

The subjects we have so far dealt with, plot, character, and authentic contemporary detail, all show features which the *Chin P'ing Mei* shares with other works of its time but which have not appeared in the earlier novel. Yet none of them is satisfactory as anything more than a partial interpretation. Other features, such as the extreme naturalness of the language, which is functional rather than expressive, lacking, except in some of the erotic scenes, the heroic flights of the earlier novel, have similar disadvantages. An equally unsatisfactory interpretation is to regard it as an erotic novel; it is probable that the *Chin P'ing Mei* is in some way a response to the existence of an erotic tradition, and not a simple response by any means, but if the novel as a whole were to be regarded in this light, the greater part of it would be meaningless. There is a similar objection to describing it simply as a "novel of exposure." Exposure it certainly contains, and the extent of its satire of social conditions has usually been underestimated. All these explanations are true, but true only partially and descriptively. So are the explanations which refer to the subject of the novel ("it holds a mirror to society"). Indeed it is doubtful if a reference to a novel's subject—by which is meant the sphere of life it represents—ever holds true in an interpretative sense. It seems always at a tangent to what one feels to be the main issue.

There are two questions in which the *Chin P'ing Mei* is saturated: money and social status. It would be surprising if they did not form part of any reasonable interpretation of the novel. I have mentioned above that the work is a mass of detail about money and prices, and it is not possible to resume it all here. A few examples can perhaps be given, however. The first chapter in the novel which is substantially by the author, and not adapted from the *Shui hu chuan*, is chapter 7; it is devoted to Hsi-men's successful attempt to marry Meng Yü-lou, an attempt

which he undertakes at least partly in order to secure her property, and which is very nearly foiled by her grasping relatives. The case is similar to the complicated negotiations about marrying Li P'ing-erh; again the transfer of wealth is an important factor, and is seen to be one. The connection between money and politics is also much stressed. By bribes, Hsi-men Ch'ing escapes the consequences of one murder and several other crimes; by bribes, in effect, he obtains an official post. There is also the matter of trade. When the story opens, Hsi-men runs a herbalist's shop in a provincial town. Gradually he extends his business to cover textiles, sending his buyers as far as Hangchow with large quantities of money. He is also a money-lender, making small loans as well as backing great contracting merchants to fill their quotas of commodities for the Imperial palaces. Money is in the very fabric of the story. It is made unambiguously clear how most things depend on it.

If there is one thing above all others in the book which is seen to depend on money, it is social status. Here again let us take Hsi-men as our example. As the book opens, he is a small-town merchant. He is barely literate; he has to puzzle over his correspondence. And during the whole course of the novel he remains barely literate. Yet he becomes the confidential friend, if not of the highest official in the country, then of the controller of that official's household. He entertains, and patronizes, two graduates fresh from the examinations in the capital. These men were the very *élite* of Chinese society—yet an unlettered ex-shopkeeper can afford to patronize them! This meeting with the two graduates, and the later meetings with them separately, are described in considerable detail, and we can surely suppose that they had a piquancy for the contemporary reader. The visits of the eunuchs in charge of the nearby tile factory no doubt serve a similar purpose. (Here, incidentally, is another authentic detail, for the contemporary reader could hardly fail to connect this tile factory with the great Imperial tileworks at Linch'ing.) These incidents must have allowed the reader to savour an interesting situation; from another point of view, they document Hsi-men's rise in social status. Such considerations are no doubt behind Hsi-men's hiring of a secretary to fit his station in life, and it is possible that they are also behind his indecorous affair with the aristocratic Lady Lin.

This view also illuminates other sections of the novel. Towards the end, there is a scene in which Wu Yüeh-niang and the other ladies are returning from a visit to Hsi-men's grave and stop to rest at a temple

outside the town. When the abbot bustles away to attend to some other lady, they realize she must be someone very grand indeed. She turns out in fact to be none other than Ch'un-mei, the maid who has been expelled from the household with ignominy on Yüeh-niang's express orders—she has made the fortunate leap from concubine to first wife of the army officer who is the temple's patron. Ch'un-mei can, of course, afford to be gracious. Surely this incident was guaranteed to send a shiver down the reader's back!

Whereas Hsi-men's struggle for social status takes place in the corrupt world of business and politics, that of his wife and concubines takes place inside his household. The women are rightly considered to be the centre of interest in the novel, and the author has indicated that this was his intention by naming the work after three of them. The fierce struggle among them for Hsi-men's favour is essentially a struggle for status; this will be obvious to any reader, and need not be dwelt on. But it would be easy to pass over the host of minor characters in whose tragedies the attempt to win or maintain status is the chief element. Such a one is Sung Hui-lien; her tragedy is told, in just a few chapters, with an objectivity worthy of de Maupassant. She is the pretty young wife of one of Hsi-men's buyers, and has the status of a servant in his household. When her husband is absent on a buying trip, she is seduced, needing little persuasion, by Hsi-men Ch'ing. Showered with his gifts, she takes the opportunity to rise a step in status. She ceases to do her kitchen-work, and instead consorts with Hsi-men's wife and concubines and is accepted by them almost on equal terms. She hopes that Hsi-men will give her husband some lucrative job which will keep him away from home. But when her husband returns, inevitably discovers the truth, and in a drunken rage threatens Hsi-men Ch'ing, the latter considers it more prudent to have him framed for a theft he did not commit, beaten, and sent away to another district. Hui-lien hangs herself, partly out of shame, for she lacks the ruthlessness essential for her kind of ambition, and partly out of mortification, for she realizes that, having failed to get her own way in this matter, she will also fail to get it in others.

Such bare accounts cannot give an adequate idea of the extent to which the novel is steeped in questions of status. In fact, almost every speech is given significance as a social act. Every detail of dress, furnishings and behaviour has significance as a symbol of social status. If, as we have said, the world of business and politics is the place where the struggle is really

decided, then in conversation, in the confrontation of person by person, it is seen to be won or lost, and in the trappings of dress and property are to be observed its trophies of success. Naturally for the women the struggle is a little different; it is decided in domestic intrigue or in the bed-chamber. But its meaning is the same.

Viewed in the light of this preoccupation with money and status, many of the other distinctive features of the novel become comprehensible. Differences in status can only be appreciated in the minutest and most authentic detail. The field in which such differences show to best advantage is that of speech, and the dialogue of the *Chin P'ing Mei* is more natural, more expressive of minute shades of social significance, and more subtly differentiated than that of any Chinese novel before it, and of all but one after it. The detail of daily life, all the rich social texture of the work, would be pointless if it was not up-to-date and freshly observed. That is why it contains the authentic argot of different kinds of people—beggars and prostitutes among them. That is also the reason why the reader is kept constantly aware of the social background of all the various characters: Li P'ing-erh was a great man's concubine, Chin-lien an ordinary local girl, Ch'en Ching-chi the spoilt young son of rich parents living in the capital, and so forth. But more than this follows from the concern with status; the very form of the novel is also a consequence of it. The short-story form, or the episodic-novel form, the only ones in existence before the author wrote, were both too loose for his purpose, for only the tightly-meshed texture of the *Chin P'ing Mei* allows questions of status to be seen comparatively and competitively. And status is nothing if not competitive. (That is why the women's struggle inside the household remains firmly in our minds, while Hsi-men's rise in the world and all its manifestations, which are of considerable—though not equal—importance, become forgotten. We do not see enough of the competition he survives.) Finally, if we assume this preoccupation to be the author's, even the presence of the erotic scenes is partially explained. They are part of the detailed description of social confrontation, and they are the field in which the battle for status among the women is at its fiercest. Many of them also afford direct motivation for later events in the novel. (Yet one has to admit that this explanation hardly accounts for the relish with which they are described, or their occasional use of hyperbole.)

If one compares the *Chin P'ing Mei* with earlier literature, especially earlier novel literature, it is as if some new, pervading element of life

had been discovered in a scientific sense for the first time. Among late-Ming works, on the other hand, although there is nothing to set beside the *Chin P'ing Mei*, there is often a thicker social texture than is found before. The author of the collection of stories named *Shih tien t'ou*, who in several ways departs further from the traditional form of the short story than do other writers, shows clearly that he is aware of the problems of adjustment which a beggar-girl must face if she is to make the Eliza Doolittle-like transformation to scholar's wife. But none of the full-length novels which deal with city life at an unexalted social level can in any way be likened to the *Chin P'ing Mei*; *The Jealous Wife* (*Ts'u hu lu*), for example, which might seem of a comparable kind—it deals in tiresome repetition with the efforts of a hen-pecked husband to obtain a concubine—has a far looser social texture. This illustrates quite clearly the inadequacy of interpreting the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s distinctive quality as the sphere of life with which it deals. *The Jealous Wife*, bad novel though it is, equally deals with ordinary life; yet it is not concerned, like the *Chin P'ing Mei*, to fill up all the interstices of the social fabric.

Although the key questions with which the *Chin P'ing Mei* deals are those of money and status, the relationship between them is not an equal one. The central question is undoubtedly status, and money is merely one of the means, the most important one so far as this novel is concerned, in seeing that status is assured. The society, in short, which is depicted in the novel is one in which money is the most effective means of acquiring status, at any but the highest level. The reasons for Hsi-men's rise to power are all reducible in the end to money, and the same applies to other figures, less prominent in the novel, such as Miao Ch'ing. This suggests that there may be a relationship between social change as depicted in the novel and social change at the time the novel was written.

Of all the literary kinds, the novel—and especially the sort of novel to which the *Chin P'ing Mei* so pre-eminently belongs—is the one most likely to be concerned with social and cultural change. There is no doubt that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries particularly, there occurred a spectacular rise to wealth and influence by a class of merchants. A modern historian writes as follows: "Whatever the institutional and ethical checks on the growth of capital, the late Ming period witnessed the rise of great merchants."[6] This was no inconspicuous rise. People who lived through this time were aware of the change, and commented freely upon it. What is more to our purpose, it was also taken account

of in imaginative literature. While it is true that one could adduce examples from among the short stories, perhaps the most interesting ones are provided by the songs. When men-of-letters turned to composing words for the tunes of the popular song, a thing they not infrequently did in the sixteenth century, they often departed from the usual theme of clandestine love, and produced a lively and pertinent commentary on the times in which they lived. Two such men were Chu Tsai-yü (born in 1536), a theorist of music, and Hsüeh Lun-tao, a retired army officer. The songs of the former show an almost obsessive interest in money, an interest made up both of contempt and an anguished regret. Hsüeh Lun-tao has a set of four songs describing a young salt-merchant in all his finery, riding on a white horse (like Hsi-men Ch'ing) and "hob-nobbing with officials."

But the association of the parvenu Hsi-men Ch'ing with a contemporary social change, while easy enough to grant in a general way, is by no means all the significance which can be extracted from this point. For in a society in which there is a newly-emerging group of persons, social contacts, social relationships, "manners" in the old sense not merely of that group but of all groups, become important. A rise in status for one group calls everybody's status into question. And if we can imagine the rise of Hsi-men Ch'ing, representing a contemporary social phenomenon, as being near to the heart of the author's conception, then the whole development of the work becomes, not obvious, but at least understandable.

Comparison between unrelated literatures is most often a blind alley, useful for orientating oneself, but not worth pursuing to any great distance. But I think that the novel, more particularly a certain kind of novel, for reasons given above, may be an exception. At any rate, the hypothesis sketched out in the previous few pages is under a heavy debt to Lionel Trilling's thesis of the novel's distinctive quality.[7] Furthermore, I believe that the reason why we find the *Chin P'ing Mei* so "modern," so "realistic," is precisely that it reminds us of the kind of novel with which we are most familiar, the novel which is in some way concerned with social change, and which presents us with "a cross-section of society."

While the interpretation outlined above seems to me to be central to our understanding of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, it should be emphasized that what has been done in this exploratory essay is merely to suggest the kind of novel to which the *Chin P'ing Mei* belongs, the kind of novel,

in fact, of which it is the quintessence. None of the novel's other themes has been touched upon. Nor has there been any attempt, except in a few chance comparisons, to place it in its context of Ming dynasty literature.

notes

1 Clement Egerton, *The Golden Lotus* (1939).

2 The first date was established by the historian Wu Han; the second date, as well as other details incidental to this essay, were established in Patrick D. Hanan, *A Study of the Composition and the Sources of the Chin P'ing Mei*, University of London thesis, 1960.

3 See Pearl Buck, *All Men are Brothers*, or J. H. Jackson, *Water Margin* (1937).

4 This has been largely removed in the translated version.

5 J. L. Bishop, "A Colloquial Short Story in the Novel Chin P'ing Mei," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1954), 394–402.

6 Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953* (1959), 197.

7 "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," in *The Liberal Imagination*, 205–222.

DONALD KEENE

Modern Japanese Literature

When William Faulkner arrived in Japan for his first visit a few years ago, he was greeted at the airport by numerous eager reporters. One of them asked his opinion of Japanese literature. Faulkner, obviously nonplussed, had vague remembrances of once having read a Japanese novel, but its title, author, and plot now escaped him. The disappointed reporters were obliged to talk of other things.

Faulkner's ignorance of Japanese literature is not exceptional; few Western writers today could have answered much more fully. The great eleventh-century novel, *The Tale of Genji*, though superbly translated into English some thirty years ago, is still not considered an indispensable part of every educated man's library; the hauntingly beautiful Nô plays are remembered best because of the pun (of which people never seem to tire) between Nô and the common European word of negation; and the *haikai* poetry, though sometimes imitated even in the West, is seldom considered seriously. Even people who decorate their houses with Japanese woodblock prints and other objects of *japonaiserie* rarely extend their interests to Japanese literature.

Appreciation of the classics of Japanese literature in the West is on an elementary level, despite the efforts of translators and a few enthusiasts. The usual adjective for these classics is "exquisite," a term of praise which by implication limits Japanese literature to the miniature and the insubstantial. Western critics writing about the art of the novel do not often feel it imperative to apologize for omitting mention of Japanese examples, despite the fact that *The Tale of Genji* is not only the world's oldest novel but one of its greatest. If questioned they are apt to say that the Japanese novel lies outside Western traditions, is too remote, and shares too few problems with ours. Yet, paradoxically, these are often the same critics who if asked why their studies fail to include modern Japanese novels reply, "They are hardly more than imitations of European literature."

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The idea that the Japanese are a "race of imitators" is so firmly planted in many Western minds that it has become all too easy to consider modern Japanese literature merely as a series of "exercises in imitation," as one recent English critic has done. What "imitation" means in practice is that the Japanese novels and other works of literature have now joined the main stream of world literature—a fact which, far from delighting those who complained of the obscurity of the traditional Japanese literature, is held up as another shameful instance of the Japanese proclivity for aping other cultures. This attitude is not confined to literature. The casual foreign visitor to Tokyo, for example, is almost invariably appalled to discover that the architecture is entirely modern, that the people wear Western clothes and ride about in automobiles and buses. His Japanese host is usually too polite to remonstrate, but he might well ask, "Did you expect we would build pagodas to house our ministries and industrial plants? Did you expect our office workers to wear silken robes with sleeves that trail to the ground? Did you expect the streets to be filled with palanquins?" He might also ask the critic who finds modern Japanese literature no more than imitation, "Did you expect us to write of mist in the pine-trees and the falling of cherry-blossoms when we are as well aware as you of Freud and Marx?"

By participating in the main stream of activity of twentieth-century literature, the modern Japanese writers have undoubtedly lost something of their ancient heritage; many, in fact, would admit that nothing written before the Meiji Restoration of 1868 really concerns them. Even those who attempt to use the classical forms and themes must make them palatable to their readers (and to themselves) by infusing them with modern psychology. It is difficult, however, to see why the Japanese are any less entitled than other peoples to utilize the discoveries of modern psychology, or why their adoption should make Japanese literature any more "imitative" than that of other countries.

This is not to deny that imitation has occurred. During the first twenty years after the Meiji Restoration—the most important event of modern Japanese history—the Japanese had no choice but to imitate Western literature as it became available to them. After two and a half centuries of self-imposed isolation, the native literary traditions had exhausted themselves, and there was no possibility even of rediscovering their excellences without first receiving fresh stimulation from the outside. Before any new, specifically modern Japanese literature could be created,

the Japanese had to master the only modern literary techniques, those of the West. It is to the credit of the Japanese—it certainly should not be held against them—that alone of the writers of Asia they succeeded in creating a truly modern literature.

The task was not an easy one, for it involved not only learning new methods of expressing emotions, but the more basic problem of learning to feel these emotions. The Japanese writer had to become an individual in the Western sense before he could become a modern writer. Under the despotic rule which had prevailed in Japan for many centuries, the importance and sanctity of the individual was unknown. The occasional rebel against conformity was likely to be an eccentric who chose to live in a tree rather than a man who like Rousseau asserted his dissimilarity to other human beings. A poet who was tired of writing about plum-blossoms or the tinted leaves of autumn might as a whim sing praises of the mosquito or the frog, but it would not have occurred to him to ask a bird:

> Teach me half the gladness
> That thy brain must know;
> Such harmonious madness
> From my lips would flow,
> The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

Even the cry of love from a poet's heart was usually expressed in such conventionalized, petrified phraseology that it was almost impossible to sound sincere. The Western concept of romantic love, indeed, was one of the difficult lessons the Japanese writers had to master. The most familiar story in the West, of the young man and the young woman who fall in love and eventually marry (to live happily ever after), was virtually absent from Japanese literature. Marriage had few romantic overtones; the usual object of the young man's ardor was a prostitute, not a blushing damsel. In order for Japanese novelists to write a "modern" love story they had to invent for the Japan they described the apparatus of romantic love.

Not only did the Japanese literature of the century before the Meiji Restoration lack the Western variety of romantic love, it was remarkably deficient in themes of a political, social, or (in general) intellectual character. The censorship imposed by the régime was mainly responsible for this dearth, but even the establishment of a more liberal government did not automatically lead to an enrichment of literature. It was necessary for the Japanese to turn to Western examples to learn how such themes

could be incorporated in literary works. Only by passing through a period of slavish imitation could the Japanese liberate themselves from the dead weight of the past and thereby build a new literature which would be valid for a nation of the twentieth century.

The early influence took many forms. Imitation of Turgenev, for instance, led to the most successful Japanese novel of the 1880's, a work in which the author employed Turgenev's techniques to describe the newly-arisen Japanese bureaucracy—a subject unheard of in earlier novels. In poetry an imitation of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* enabled one poet to escape from the rigidly confined poetic forms of the past and begin the modern movement in Japanese poetry. Malraux remarked about Goya that it was necessary for him first to imitate to perfection the techniques of his master Bayeu before he could become Goya; Japanese literature, which in 1868 had sunk to one of its lowest points, could only become itself again through imitation and mastery of European examples.

By the early years of this century many writers had already learned European techniques sufficiently well to write competent novels and poetry, but their writing almost always has a curiously flat quality; there seems to be no intellectual apprehension of the emotions described. One of the first works which strikes us as essentially modern is the amazing diary kept in Roman letters (*Romaji*) by the poet Ishikawa Takuboku[1] in 1909. On almost every page we find the three-dimensional image of a modern man: "Why did I decide to keep this diary in Romaji? Why? I love my wife, and it's precisely because I love her that I don't want her to read this diary. No, that's a lie! It's true that I love her, and it's true that I don't want her to read this, but the two facts are not necessarily related."

Takuboku grew up in a village in the remote northeast of Japan, but as his youthful diaries inform us, he read extensively both in the Japanese classics and European literature. At the age of seventeen (in 1902) he translated Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman*, and he tells us that at the same period he was profoundly moved by the music of Wagner. Before long he was reading Kropotkin and referring to himself as a Socialist. A little more than thirty years after the first introduction of modern Western culture to Japan it was possible for a man like Takuboku in his village to be sharing in European literary, musical, and intellectual life.

His poetry is for the most part in the traditional *waka* form evolved more than a thousand years before his time. It consists of five lines of

5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables. Takuboku filled this ancient form with modern content, as he could never have done without Western literature behind him.

Kagiri naki	My sister pitied
Chishiki no yoku ni	My eyes that were burning
Moyuru me o	With insatiable
Ane wa itamiki	Thirst for knowledge:
Hito kouru ka to	She thought I must be in love.

Some of Takuboku's poems, particularly those in non-traditional forms, are more openly connected with Europe. His *After Endless Discussions*, for example, contains this verse:

> We know what we are seeking,
> We know what the people want,
> And we know what we must do.
> We know more than the young men of Russia fifty years ago—
> Yet no one with clenched fist bangs on the table
> To proclaim *V NAROD*.[2]

Takuboku's knowledge of socialism and anarchism was limited, and his best works are not political in nature, but it took courage and confidence to write in this vein. Takuboku loved his country's literature as he loved the mountains at his native place, but intellectually he was a child of Europe.

One cause of the emergence of a figure like Takuboku—and, indeed, of the extraordinary flourishing of literature during the period 1905-1915—was Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. This victory over an important European power gave the Japanese a new confidence, which in literature was reflected in the bold attempts to fuse the traditions of Japan with those of the West. Nagai Kafû (1879–1959), for example, joined a love for French literature to an equal love for the Tokyo of the mid-nineteenth century; many of the poems of Kitahara Hakushû (1885–1943) are dotted with foreign words used for their exotic sounds, but he also wrote children's songs of perfect, unaffected simplicity; and Tanizaki Junichirô (born 1886), who began his career with stories of a diabolic "Baudelairian" flavour and later translated Oscar Wilde, was finally to become the most conservatively Japanese of modern writers, the elegist of the disappearing traditional culture.

The list of important writers who appeared in the decade after the

Russo-Japanese War might be prolonged almost indefinitely. It would include Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sôseki, two novelists who are still revered today both by students of literature and the Japanese public, but whose works are unfortunately not likely ever to win many foreign readers. It includes also Shiga Naoya (born 1883), who at one time was styled by critics as the "god" of the Japanese novel. Shiga's most characteristic literary productions are in an autobiographical vein. Some of them seem hardly more than pages torn from a diary. The Japanese novel which in 1868 had been virtually devoid of individual personality had now come to be filled with minute descriptions of the daily activities of the author, as if his individuality made every action significant. In their noble style, their tone, and in the events described these works by Shiga Naoya are unmistakably Japanese, but they could not have been written had Japanese literature not first passed through a baptism of individualism from the West.

Western influences on Japanese writers have been various and shifting. It has not taken very long for a literary movement which originated in Europe to find echoes in Japan, almost as if Japan were an island off the European continent instead of Asia. Indeed, with rare exceptions Japanese writers have been relatively uninterested in the literature and peoples of Asia. Until very recently at least, China was as remote to Japanese as to European writers; for every Japanese who could speak modern Chinese, there were a thousand who spoke English. One leading Japanese writer in fact confessed that it was only on reading Waley's English translation of *The Tale of Genji* that he first became aware of the novel's splendour. Japanese writers came to look even at their own traditions with European eyes, and they found less excitement in an exquisitely turned phrase on the departing glory of the cherry-blossoms than in some more universal, if less finished statement.

The brilliant Akutagawa Ryûnosuke (known abroad chiefly as the author of the stories on which the film *Rashomon* was based), lent to the ancient Japanese tales which he reinterpreted his glittering style and a modern, essentially European consciousness. It is as if he attempted to see in the old stories the dramatic possibilities obscured by centuries of traditional interpretations. His method is apparent in the story *Kesa and Moritô*. In the original tale the warrior Moritô, madly in love with the beautiful Kesa, compels her to agree to allow his visit that night. But Kesa, faithful to her husband and guessing that Moritô intends to kill

him, sleeps in his place. Moritô as expected kills Kesa instead of the husband, and in shock and despair Moritô becomes a priest. Akutagawa's interpretation of the story is almost perverse: Moritô, far from being madly in love with Kesa, is repelled by the decay in her beauty since first he knew her, and his decision to kill her husband results from a subconscious impulse. Kesa, on the other hand, wants to be killed by Moritô, not in order to save her husband but because she realizes that Moritô no longer loves her. The Japanese tale thus became the vehicle of Akutagawa's own rather unhealthy sensibility, in a manner unthinkable without a Western outlook.

The traditional Japanese religions—Buddhism in particular—came to offer writers like Akutagawa literary rather than religious inspiration. The Japanese today are for the most part unconcerned with religion. Christianity, after a promising start early in this century, has all but vanished from intellectual life, and Buddhism for most writers consists of an intriguing collection of legends. Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), however, was one writer whose modern, European point of view was strongly tinged with Buddhist overtones, especially when he described the hell on earth which man makes for himself. In his story *Time*, he narrates the spiritual descent of a troupe of actors from one ring of inferno to the next, till they reach a pit where as ravenous demons they senselessly inflict pain on one another. In *The Machine*, another of his short stories, his characters are one level lower still, in the realm of inhuman machinery.

Concern over the fate of suffering mankind was expressed in a different manner by the exponents of proletarian literature, who were extremely vociferous in Japan in the twenties and early thirties. Instead of Yokomitsu's Buddhist pessimism, the writers of the proletarian school brimmed with the Marxist conviction that a social revolution could bring happiness to all men. Many promising writers devoted their energies to this movement but with very little success, for it was basically non-literary, or even anti-literary in its emphasis. In the proletarian novels there was no room for individual problems or individual emotions, but only for the clash between the downtrodden workers and the capitalist monsters. Only by accident, as it were, did the writers' literary talents surmount the burden of ideology. It is a great pity that so much heart and effort went into the production of these lifeless, pathetically dated writings.

Literary production in the thirties, apart from those of the Left Wing,

was dominated mainly by older writers, men who had first gained their celebrity during the decade after the Russo-Japanese War. Tanizaki Junichirō was writing his best novels as well as *In Praise of Shadows* with its evocations of a departed Japan. Among the younger writers Kawabata Yasunari (born 1899) came into prominence with a series of short stories and novels mainly dealing with the psychology of women. His novel *Snow Country*, translated into English, combines delicacy with passion, being at once intensely Japanese in its emotional responses and Western in the description of these emotions. It is one of the finest products of the union of the two literary traditions.

Kawabata's novels, even those written before the outbreak of the Pacific War, betray little of the frenzied patriotic agitation of the time. As the war progressed, however, the government showed itself less and less tolerant of literature which failed to contribute to the war effort. Publication of a novel by Tanizaki (translated into English under the title of *The Makioka Sisters*) had to be discontinued, not because it voiced overt opposition to the war, but merely because it portrayed with affection happier days in the past. Most Japanese writers after initial elation over Japanese victories were quickly disillusioned, and tried to keep from getting involved in the war. Inevitably, however, many were obliged to write material of a more or less propagandistic nature. When the defeat came most writers welcomed the chance to begin new careers with greater liberty than they had known.

In marked contrast to the strange torpor of Germany and some other European countries, Japan since the war has been full of literary activity. It may be that defeat actually revitalized Japanese writing. The grim days immediately after the end of the war were chronicled by such writers as Dazai Osamu (1909–1948) and Hayashi Fumiko (1904–1951), a woman novelist. Dazai's novel *The Setting Sun* was so successful an account of the disintegration of the Japanese aristocracy after the end of the war that the term "people of the setting sun" passed into common vocabulary as a name for that class. His short story *Villon's Wife*, like most of his other writings, contains autobiographical elements, but they have not the limitations of earlier Japanese "I" novels. In reading Dazai's works one need make no concessions to their Japanese origin: they are modern world writing, as polished in style and technique as any.

Other aspects of post-war Japan are described in Hayashi Fumiko's studies of the lower classes, which bring life to the wretched hovels that

mushroomed from the ashes of burnt Tokyo. But the Japanese could not remain forever immersed in gloomy consideration of bombed-out sites, and again writers sought to find fresh inspiration in the literatures of the past, both their own and those of other countries. One of the most gifted and versatile of these writers, Mishima Yukio (born 1925), drew his inspiration for his novel *The Sound of Waves* from the Greek romance *Daphnis and Chloë*, but he also turned to the Nô theatre of the fifteenth century for the form and themes of some of his plays, somewhat in the manner of Anouilh's adaptations of Greek dramas. Mishima's Nô plays are meant to be performed either as wholly modern works without reference to their origins, or with the rhythms and musical effects of the traditional drama, depending on the preference of the director. These plays which are at once in the direct line of Japanese traditions and perfectly intelligible to modern audiences seem to point the direction which Japanese literature will develop in the future.

notes

1 I give names in Japanese order, with surnames first.
2 Russian expression, meaning "to the people."

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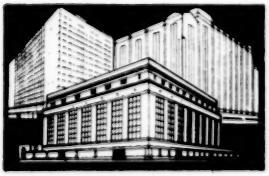

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